

Literary Architecture and Aural Structuring Techniques in Amos

The book of Amos, like most of the prophetic books, offers an intriguing challenge to rhetorical-structural analysis⁽¹⁾. On the one hand, disruptive features such as intrusive hymnic pieces and narrative material, abrupt genre shifts, and disjunction of thematically related sayings create an impression of mild disorder⁽²⁾. Yet the reader cannot help noticing an orderliness in parts of the book, particularly in such highly structured sections as 1,3-2,16; 3,3-8; 4,6-12; and 7,1-9. In light of the growing interest in the "residual orality" of ancient texts, this paper will re-examine the literary architecture of Amos, paying particular attention to oral/aural structuring techniques⁽³⁾.

(1) Important previous studies of the literary structure of Amos include: R. GORDIS, "The Composition and Structure of Amos", *HTR* 33 (1940) 239-251; S. W. EUBANKS, *Amos: Artist in Literary Composition* (Diss. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1943); Z. WEISMAN, "Stylistic Parallels in Amos and Jeremiah, Their Implications for the Composition of Amos", *Shnaton* 1 (1975) 129-149; K. KOCH, et al., *Amos. Untersucht mit den Methoden einer strukturalen Formgeschichte*, 3 vols. (AOAT 30; Kevelär 1976); C. COULOT, "Propositions pour une structuration du livre d'Amos au niveau rédactionnel", *RSR* 51 (1977) 169-186; J. DE WAARD, "The Chiastic Structure of Amos V,1-17", *VT* 27 (1977) 170-177; W. A. SMALLEY, "Recursion Patterns and the Sectioning of Amos", *BT* 30 (1979) 118-127; Y. GITAY, "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3.1-15", *CBQ* 42 (1980) 293-309; H. GESE, "Komposition bei Amos", *VTS* 32 (1981) 74-95; J. LUST, "Remarks on the Redaction of Amos V 4-6, 14-15", *OTS* 21 (1981) 129-154; A. SPREAFICO, "Amos: Struttura Formale e Spunti per una Interpretazione", *RivB* 29 (1981) 147-176; A. VAN DER WAL, "The Structure of Amos", *JSOT* 26 (1983) 107-113; N. J. TROMP, "Amos V 1-17: Towards a Stylistic and Rhetorical Analysis", *OTS* 23 (1984) 65-85.

(2) See examples offered by H. W. WOLFF, *A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos*, trans. by W. Janzen, et al. (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1977) 106-113; and O. EISSFELDT, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. by P. R. Ackroyd (New York 1965) 398-401.

(3) The phenomenon of "residual orality" in ancient texts and "oral hermeneutics" has been the subject of a number of recent studies; e.g.,

For Three Transgressions of Israel, Even for Four (Chs. 1-2)

An ancient audience would easily perceive chs. 1-2, the oracles against the seven foreign nations and Israel, as the book's first major unit. The series of oracles follows a tightly structured pattern devised to convey cohesiveness to the listener. Each of the eight successive component stanzas begins with the identical introductory formula, "Thus says Yahweh, 'For three transgressions of [place name], even for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they/he ... [nation's sin]'"; which is followed (except in the eighth stanza) by the declaration, "So I will send fire upon [place or place name], and it shall devour the strongholds of [place name or pronominal suffix]". In each oracle the formulaic introduction is followed by a prophetic utterance containing the same two elements, always presented in the same order: (1) accusation against the nation; and (2) declaration of Yahweh's intended punishment upon that nation.

The final stanza, directed against Israel, stands apart from the others. It is marked as unique by at least two rhetorical features: (1) Its accusation and punishment section (vv. 6-16) is much longer than those of the preceding stanzas. (2) Its punishment section is the only one among the eight to omit the formula, "So I will send fire upon ... and it shall devour the strongholds of ...". The motive for "highlighting" (to use discourse analysis terminology) this eighth stanza is not difficult to surmise. Unlike the first seven stanzas, this one addresses Israel itself, Amos' target audience. The series of seven succinct and formulaic messages against Israel's neighbors in

H. V. D. PARUNAK, *Structural Studies in Ezekiel* (Ann Arbor, MI 1979); id., "Oral Typesetting: Some Uses of Biblical Structure", *Bib* 62 (1981) 153-168; J. M. FOLEY, "The Oral Theory in Context", in *Oral Traditional Literature* (FS. Albert Bates Lord; [ed. J. M. FOLEY] Columbus, OH 1981); W. J. ONG, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London 1982); E. A. HAVELOCK, "The Oral and Written Word: A Reappraisal", in *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton 1982) 3-38; id., "Oral Composition in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles", *NHL* 16 (1984) 175-197; J. NEUSNER, *Oral Tradition in Judaism: The Case of the Mishnah* (A. B. Lord Studies in Oral Tradition 1; New York 1987); J. DEWEY, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark", *Int* 43 (1989) 32-44; and P. J. ACHTEMEIER, "Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity", *JBL* 109 (1990) 3-27.

1,3–2,5 presumably functions as a foil for the unit's main objective, the stinging message of 2,6–16. The 7 + 1 pattern here would have served a clever rhetorical function, viz., to ensure the surprise effect. The completion of seven oracles would cause the Israelite audience to momentarily — and with some pleasure — think Amos' message was concluded with the oracle against the seventh nation, Judah, since groupings of seven were exceedingly commonplace⁽⁴⁾; only to be startled by Amos' *eighth* point: the indictment of their own nation⁽⁵⁾.

Among the seven shorter strophes in 1,3–2,5 there is enough uniformity of pattern to achieve cohesiveness for the listener, and enough variety to create interest and a sense of artistry. Some have posited diachronic theories to account for the unevenness within these messages, with the Edom, Tyre, and Judah strophes frequently seen as secondary. The kind of variation found here, however, more likely represents rhetorical skill rather than the non-genuineness of certain parts⁽⁶⁾.

That variety here does not necessarily indicate non-genuineness is suggested by the fact that there is notable variety even among the four stanzas generally considered genuine (viz., Aram, Philistia, Ammon, Moab). For example, the repetend in the first two stanzas, "I will cut off the inhabitants of [place name], and him who holds the scepter from [place name]", is entirely omitted in the Ammon and Moab stanzas. Conversely, the references to "shouting" (*bitrûā*) and the shared fate of the nation's ruler and its "princes" (*šārāyw*; *šārêhā*) which occur in both the Ammon and Moab stanzas (1,14–15; 2,2–3) are entirely absent in the first pair.

The thematic/structural pairing of the first two stanzas and the similar pairing of the Ammon and Moab stanzas leads us to expect a comparable pairing of the intervening two stanzas, viz., Tyre and

⁽⁴⁾ J. LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos", *JBL* 106 (1987) 219, and especially n. 3.

⁽⁵⁾ See S. M. PAUL, *Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 1991) 22–24, for an excellent discussion of the 7 + 1 (or seven-eight) pattern in ancient Near Eastern literature, in the Bible, and in the present text. Of course it could also be argued (less convincingly in light of Amos' preference for sevenfold structuring; see below) that this rhetorical touch was added by a later editor.

⁽⁶⁾ S. M. PAUL, "Amos 1:3–2:3: A Concatenous Literary Pattern", *JBL* 90 (1971) 397–403; id., *Amos*, 16–26.

Edom; and this is precisely the case. These two stanzas, like the other two pairs, display two features that simultaneously link them together and set them apart from the others, viz., their references to the treatment of "brothers" (*'āhîm*), and their identically abbreviated punishment sections.

Of the seven foreign nations, only Judah, with its lengthened accusation and abbreviated threat, is unpaired (an inevitable — and highly exploited — phenomenon in biblical heptads arranged in introverted or alternating patterns). The result is an A-A'-B-B'-C-C'-D pattern.

The Lord God Has Spoken; Who Can But Prophecy? (Ch. 3)

There are at least four rhetorical signals employed to indicate to the audience that 3,1ff. comprises a new major unit (7):

(1) The series of tightly-knit stanzas in chs. 1-2 is completed with the eighth nation, Israel, in 2,6-16. The eighth stanza presents the expected twofold sequence, accusation (2,6-12) and declaration of punishment (2,13-16). Chapter 3,1 does not introduce a *ninth* nation; nor does it continue the punishment section of the eighth.

(2) The oracle against Israel is concluded with the formula, *ne'um YHWH*, "oracle of Yahweh" (2,16), an aurally-oriented expression which is used frequently throughout the prophets to mark the conclusion of a prophetic discourse or saying (8), although it can also occur in the midst of a discourse, functioning simply to remind the audience of the identity of the (divine) speaker (9). In

(7) That 3,1 marks the beginning of the book's second major unit is commonly agreed; see, E. JACOB-C. A. KELLER-S. AMSLER, *Osée, Joël, Abdias, Jonas, Amos* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland 1965) 185; W. RUDOLPH, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Stuttgart 1971) 150; WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 175; etc. V. MAAG, *Text, Wortschatz und Begriffswelt des Buches Amos* (Leiden 1951) 12-13, following K. BUDDE, "Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Amos", *JBL* 43 (1924) 75-76, argues, unconvincingly, that 3,1-2 forms the conclusion of the message of 1,2-2,16.

(8) For example, see Isa 3,15; 54,17; Jer 1,19; 12,17; 15,9; 29,23; 32,44; 39,13; 49,6; 49,39; Ezek 12,28; 14,11.23; 15,8; 16,63; 24,14; 32,32; 39,29; Hos 11,11; Obad 4; Hag 2,9; Zech 3,10; cf. H. EISING, *ne'um*, *TWAT* V, 119-123.

(9) Cf. Isa 1,24; 14,22; 17,3; 19,4; 30,1; 55,8; Jer 2,9; 17,24; 31,33; Ezek 11,8; Joel 2,12; Obad 8; Mic 4,6; Zeph 1,10.

chs. 1-2 the expression occurs only twice. In 2,11 it stands in the middle of a saying (presumably to remind the audience of the speaker). In 2,16 it concludes the final clause of the final pericope of ch. 2 and would communicate the impression of closure to the hearer.

(3) The introductory formula in 3,1, *šim'û 'et haddābar hazzeh 'āšer dibber YHWH 'ălêkem b'enê yisrā'ēl*, is a variation of the standard formula used throughout the prophets to introduce messages and major literary units. This formulaic introduction normally contains three elements, virtually always in the same order: (a) the verb *šim'û*, "Hear!", in the imperative, usually in the plural; (b) the direct object of *šim'û*, generally containing the words "word" (*dābār*) and "Yahweh"; e.g., *dēbar YHWH*, "the word of the Lord"; or sometimes *haddābār hazzeh*, "this word"; or simply *zō't*, "this"; (c) vocative of the addressees; e.g., "O house of Israel". The formula is used in Hos 4,1, for example, to introduce the second part of that book. This same formula, or a variation, introduces the first messages of three prophetic books: Isaiah (1,2), Joel (1,2), and Micah (1,2); and it signals the beginnings of new messages and major literary units in a number of prophetic books⁽¹⁰⁾.

(4) Chapter 3,1ff. begins almost immediately with a strikingly new series: viz., a succession of rhetorical questions (vv. 3-6) thematically different from the series in chs. 1-2, confirming the transition to a new unit.

This cluster of aurally-oriented signals would be more than sufficient to indicate to the audience that 3,1ff. initiates the second major unit in Amos⁽¹¹⁾.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Isa 7,13; 36,13; 49,1; 51,1; Jer 7,1-2; 10,1; 11,1; 17,19-20; 19,1-3; 21,11; 22,1-2; Ezek 13,1-2; 25,3; Hos 5,1; Mic 3,1; 6,1; cf. Deut 4,1; 5,1; 9,1; 1 Sam 15,1; 1 Kgs 22,19; 2 Kgs 7,1; 18,28; 20,16. A number of scholars have understood this formula as functioning to introduce the major units or messages in Amos, including S. R. DRIVER, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh 1913) 315; EISSFELDT, *Introduction*, 398; B. S. CHILDS, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia 1979) 403; KOCH, et al., *Amos*, 1,81; 2,76.107; VAN DER WAL, "Structure", 107; LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 217-222.

⁽¹¹⁾ WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 175, argues convincingly from other grounds that 3,1ff. cannot be understood as a continuation of the message of chs. 1-2 but is intended as the introduction to a new message.

The new unit, which extends to 3,15⁽¹²⁾, focuses on the coming destruction of Israel and its announcement by the prophet. Several key words and themes tie this unit together, including "land of Egypt" (*'ereš mišrayim*; vv.1.9), "visit/punish" (*pqd* 7; vv. 2.14a.14b), "know" (*yd'*; vv.2.10); the theme of the "lion" (*'aryēh*; *'ārī*) and its prey (vv.4.8.12); and the theme of the coming punishment and destruction of Israel.

The unit appears to be positioned here to develop one of the themes introduced in the final stanza of the previous message, viz., the judgment of Israel. While the previous unit alluded to the physical destruction of the other seven nations, and to Israel's coming military defeat (2,13-16), mention of the destruction of Israel's physical structures was conspicuously absent. In this unit this lacuna is filled. A second theme broached in the first unit, the issue of Israel preventing the prophets from speaking (2,11-12), is expanded upon in this new unit: Yahweh has revealed his plans of destruction to the prophets, and they have no choice but to prophesy (3,3-8).

The internal structure of this unit appears to be a seven-part chiasm, with each of the seven constituent units containing a divine speech formula (the last contains two):

1. Yahweh will punish (*pqd* 7) Israel for their sins; introduced by "Hear" (*šim'ū*) (vv. 1.2)
2. Coming disaster, declared by the prophets; theme of the lion (*'aryēh*) and its prey (vv. 3-8)
3. Foreign fortresses (*'armēnôt*) called to assemble against the mountains of Samaria (v. 9)
4. Condemnation: Israel does not know how to do right (v. 10)
5. Israel's fortresses (*'armēnôt*) and strongholds will be destroyed (v. 11)

(12) Cf. LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 217-218; E. R. WENDLAND, "The 'Word of the Lord' and the Organization of Amos", *Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics* 2, 4 (1988) 11-12; EISSFELDT, *Introduction*, 398; CHILDS, *Introduction*, 403; GITAY, "Amos's Art of Speech", 293-309; et al.; on the other hand, R. RENDTORFF, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia 1985) 221, extends the unit to 4,3.

6. Near-total disaster coming; theme of the lion (*'ārî*) and its prey (v. 12)
7. Yahweh will punish (*pqd* 7) Israel for their iniquities; introduced by "Hear" (*šim'û*) (vv. 13-15).

Also on the microstructural level there is a proclivity for septenary organization. The second sub-unit of this section (3,3-8) features a 7 + 1 series: Yahweh's approaching judgment and the role of the prophet is presented by a series of seven rhetorical questions, followed by the real point of the series (3,3-8). The final sub-unit (3,13-14) also features a heptadic series, this time seven verbs depicting Israel's coming destruction (punish, punish, cut off, fall, tear down, destroy, demolish).

Yet You Did Not Return to Me (Ch. 4)

Chapter 4,1 heralds the next major unit. The transition is marked for the hearer in several ways. The formula *nē'um YHWH*, which has not occurred since the end of the first unit (2,16), concludes the prediction of doom ending in 3,15, signaling closure. Chapter 4,1 is introduced by the rhetorically strategic *šim'û* formula: "Hear this word" (*šim'û haddābār hazzeh*) + a vocative ("you cows of Bashan"). Another cue for the audience is the shift to new addressees — now the Israelite women who live in Samaria. Moreover, after two brief introductory declarations, a new, lengthy, and tightly structured series commences in 4,6, confirming to the listener that a new unit has begun.

The highly structured series consists of five successive stanzas (4,6.7-8.9.10.11) in which Yahweh reviews the successive disasters he has brought upon Israel to provoke her to return. To convey cohesiveness to the audience, each stanza in the series ends identically: *wēlō' šabtem 'āday, nē'um YHWH*, "'Yet you did not return to me', declares Yahweh". The formula *nē'um YHWH*, which closed the book's first two major units, functions here to close each individual stanza within the unit.

It is noteworthy that this five-part series is preceded by two introductory pericopes, each likewise ending with *nē'um YHWH* (4,1-3.4-5) and each approximately the same length as each of the five stanzas of the series. The entire unit, therefore, is composed of a total of seven paragraphs or sayings ending with *nē'um YHWH*. The

audience would probably begin to perceive the new pattern of the rhetorically intriguing repetition of *ne'um YHWH* by vv. 6-8, after hearing three or four stanzas concluded by the same formula. Their anticipation of a total of seven such stanzas would be satisfied by the closure of the unit, with additional rhetorical interest created by the grouping of the final five stanzas into a secondary series.

As to the book's linear development, this unit introduces two new points in Amos' message: (1) the coming judgment upon Israel will not only involve defeat and destruction, but an even more ominous aspect: exile from the land (vv. 2-3.12); and (2) Yahweh has made every effort to prevent this final disaster from occurring, to no avail (vv. 6-12).

Having closed each of the seven stanzas or sayings of this unit with *ne'um YHWH*, the author/editor would need another kind of closure to signal the end of the entire unit for the audience. He employs a majestic hymnic piece (4,13) for the purpose, which functions as a dramatic conclusion to the measured crescendo of Yahweh's approaching judgment, creating a powerful rhetorical effect not unlike that of the introduction to the oracles against the nations in 1,2 (both pieces extol Yahweh's might as displayed in his power to affect and reverse the forces of nature).

Seek Good, and Not Evil, That You May Live (5,1-17)

Immediately following this hymnic closing is the anticipated introductory formula in 5,1, *šim'û 'et haddābār hazzeh ... bêt yiśrā'el* ("Hear this word ... O house of Israel"), signaling to the audience the beginning of the next major unit⁽¹³⁾. The new beginning in 5,1 is further marked by the shift in genre, from prophetic discourse to lament (5,1-3).

What follows would seem to be a hodgepodge of sayings and smaller units: lamentation (5,1-3); a call to repentance (vv. 4-6a); a brief warning and condemnation (vv. 6b-7); a hymnic piece (vv. 8-9); a condemnation and prediction of judgment (vv. 10-13); a call to repentance (vv. 14-15); a prediction of coming lamentation because

⁽¹³⁾ Most scholars see 5,1 as introducing a new major literary unit; e.g., WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 231; EISSFELDT, *Introduction*, 398; LIMBURG, "Seven-fold Structures", 217-218; WENDLAND, "Structure of Amos", 14; F.I. ANDERSEN - D.N. FREEDMAN, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York 1989) 461ff.; PAUL, *Amos*, 158ff.

of Yahweh's coming punishment (vv. 16-17); a series of woe-oracles (5,18ff.; 6,1ff.); etc.

The recurring themes and words of lamentation and seeking Yahweh in 5,1-6 and 14-17, however, would serve to convey the cohesion of 5,1-17 to the audience. This impression would be strengthened by the chiasmic structure of 5,1-17, which would not have been lost upon an attentive ancient audience. The chiasm here is composed, not surprisingly, of seven parts; and some of these parts in turn feature heptads on a micro-structural level. The lament in vv. 1-3 is echoed by the lamenting in vv. 16-17, where seven words for lamentation occur. The twice-repeated exhortation to "seek" (*diršû*) Yahweh and "live" (*wihyû*) that occurs in vv. 4-6a is mirrored by the exhortation to "seek" (*diršû*) Yahweh so that "you may live" (*tihyû*) in vv. 14-15; and both these calls to repentance feature a series of seven imperatival verbs. The warning and the accusation of lack of justice and righteousness in vv. 10-13 echoes the threat and accusation of lack of justice and righteousness in vv. 6b-7. Standing strategically at the center of this seven-part symmetry is the book's second hymnic piece, featuring seven verbs (vv. 8-9).

The symmetrical nature of this unit has been seen and discussed independently by De Waard and others⁽¹⁴⁾. The structure could be represented as follows:

1. Lamentation over fallen Israel (5,1-3)
2. Call to repentance: "Seek (*diršû*) me and live (*wihyû*)"; seven sarcastic imperatival verbs: come, transgress, multiply, bring, offer, proclaim, publish (vv. 4-6a)⁽¹⁵⁾
3. Warning and condemnation: "lest he break out like fire ... you who turn justice into wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth" (vv. 6b-7)

⁽¹⁴⁾ See DE WAARD, "Chiasmic Structure"; and also TROMP, "Amos 5:1-17", 56-84; WENDLAND, "Organization of Amos", 14; G.V. SMITH, *Amos: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids 1989) 155-160; and id., "Amos 5:13 — The Deadly Silence of the Prosperous", *JBL* 107 (1988) 289-291. The only significant difference between the analysis proposed here and that of De Waard is that he identifies vv. 8a-c as "D"; v. 8d as "E"; and v. 9 as "D" — while the analysis here takes vv. 8-9 as a single unit.

⁽¹⁵⁾ This heptad has been noted by LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 220.

4. Hymn of Yahweh's power; seven verbs: makes, turns, darkens, calls, pours, causes to flash, comes (vv. 8-9)⁽¹⁶⁾
- 3'. Warning and condemnation: Israel's injustice; "you who afflict the righteous"; coming judgment (vv. 10-13)
- 2'. Call to repentance: "Seek (*diršû*) good, and not evil, that you may live (*tiḥyû*)"; seven imperatival verbs or verbs of promise: seek, live, be, hate, love, maintain, be gracious (vv. 14-15)
- 1'. Coming lamentation; seven terms used for lamentation (vv. 16-17).

Regarding the function of this unit in the book's linear development, two new elements are now introduced. The first is lamentation. In this unit the progression of judgment against Israel, from military defeat (first unit), to the destruction of Israel's cities (second unit), to exile (third unit) reaches its logical conclusion. With the nation defeated, destroyed, and exiled, the only remaining action to be performed is lamentation. The progression has reached its endpoint.

Significantly, it is here that we encounter Amos' strategically positioned call to repentance, its placement suggesting the message, "Israel, this is your choice: repentance, or lamentation over your nation's utter destruction".

Woe to You Who Desire the Day of the Lord! (5,18-6,14)

Several aurally-oriented cues signal the end of the fourth unit at 5,17. (1) The concluding *'āmar YHWH* in v. 17b communicates closure. Neither *nē'um YHWH* nor a concluding *'āmar YHWH* occurs anywhere else in 5,1-17, so that its occurrence here conveys completion. (2) The chiasm begun in 5,1 is completed in 5,16-17. (3) The next verse, 5,18, begins with *hōy*, an interjection employed throughout the prophets to introduce woe-oracles, and therefore a word that frequently functions to mark the beginning of a new unit (e.g., Isa 5,8; 10,1; 18,1; 28,1; 29,1; 30,1; 31,1; 33,1; 55,1; Jer 23,1; 48,1; Ezek 34,2; Mic 2,1; Nah 3,1; Hab 2,6; Zeph 3,1). (4) The

⁽¹⁶⁾ LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 219.

woe-oracle introduced in 5,18 represents an abrupt shift in genre and suggests to the audience that a new unit is beginning⁽¹⁷⁾.

Woe-oracles generally feature two elements⁽¹⁸⁾: (1) a pejorative description of the subjects against whom the oracle is directed, who are usually depicted by a series of participles governed by the definite article (functioning as a relative); and (2) a series of reasons why these (often apparently prosperous) subjects are to be pitied or considered unfortunate — normally because Yahweh is going to bring judgments upon them. In addition, woe-oracles often exhibit a third formal feature: one or more repetitions of the exclamatory *hōy* (cf. Isa 5,8ff.; 10,5ff.; 45,9ff.; Ezek 13,3ff.; Hab 2,6ff.).

All three of these typical features are present in Amos 5,18–6,14. (1) The subjects of the oracle are described in condemnatory language, with defined participles generously employed (5,18.21-23; 6,1-6.12-13). (2) Yahweh's coming judgments upon the (presently prosperous) subjects is announced in 5,18-20.26-27; 6,7-11.14. (3) The word *hōy* is repeated in 6,1.

Regarding its function in the book's linear structure, this unit represents the next logical phase in Amos' presentation: the progression from defeat, destruction, and exile, to lament (which represents the judgment as a *fait accompli*) sets the stage for this woe-oracle, pronounced against those who have caused and will experience the coming disaster.

Andersen and Freedman analyze the sayings of this section as comprising eight units: (1) Day of Yahweh (5,18-20); (2) Justice (5,21-24); (3) Threat of Exile (5,25-27); (4) The Seven Woes (6,1-6);

⁽¹⁷⁾ That 5,1-17 and 5,18ff. are intended as two separate major units is supported by WENDLAND, "Organization of Amos", 14-16; DE WAARD, "Chiastic Structure"; D. STUART, *Hosea-Jonah* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX 1987) 344; and SMITH, *Amos*, 149-160; cf. WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 254.

⁽¹⁸⁾ For studies of the literary genre of the *hōy*-oracles, see E. GERSTENBERGER, "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets", *JBL* 81 (1962) 249-263; R.J. CLIFFORD, "The Use of *HŌY* in the Prophets", *CBQ* 28 (1966) 458-464; G. WANKE, "ōy und hōy", *ZAW* 78 (1966) 215-218; W. JANZEN, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle* (BZAW 125; Berlin 1972); H.J. ZOBEL, "HŌY", *TDOT* 3, 359-365; D.R. HILLERS, "Hōy and Hōy-Oracles. A Neglected Syntactical Aspect", in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (FS. D.N. Freedman; Winona Lake, IN 1983) 185-188; and bibliography in A. VAN DER WAL, *Amos: A Classified Bibliography* (Amsterdam 1986) 180-185.

(5) The Exiles (6,7); (6) The Oath (6,8-10); (7) Last Woes (6,11-13); (8) Final Threat (6,14)⁽¹⁹⁾. Of these delineations, at least the last is suspect: 6,11 and 6,14, both beginning with *kî* + *hinneh* followed by a judgment decree, would seem to form an inclusio, creating a single sub-unit, vv. 11-14. Assuming Andersen and Freedman are correct (with this one caveat), the unit could be analyzed as a seven-part chiasm:

1. Declaration of reversal of fortunes; woe upon those who look forward to the future day of Yahweh; their expectations of victory, glory, will be reversed; future will be darkness, not light; disaster, not a time of brightness; one's home, usually a place of security, will be turned into a place to be bitten by a poisonous snake (5,18-20)
2. Yahweh's displeasure with Israel's religious activity; he hates (*šānē'*) and rejects (*mā'as*) their boisterous, showy activity, singing, and noise, and wishes that they would cease and be quiet (5,21-25)
3. Threat of exile (*glh*) (5,26-27)
4. Sevenfold woe: seven verbs describe the activities of the people against whom woe is pronounced (who lie, stretch, eat, sing, invent, drink, anoint), plus one verb depicting what they do not do (grieve) (6,1-6)
5. Threat of exile (*glh*) (6,7)
6. Yahweh's displeasure with Israel, and coming destruction; he hates (*šānē'*) and detests (*t'b*) Israel's pride and fortresses; Yahweh's punishment will cause the people to be quiet, secretive, and to fear even mentioning Yahweh's name (6,8-10)
7. Declaration of reversal of fortunes; future defeat of those who rejoice in past military victories; theme of reversals (justice turned to poison, righteousness to bitterness; past victory to future defeat) (6,11-14).

While this analysis is not certain⁽²⁰⁾, what is clear is that 5,18-6,14 would most likely have been perceived by Amos' audience as a unit.

⁽¹⁹⁾ ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 519-608.

⁽²⁰⁾ This analysis is tentative. One wonders, for example, whether 6,7 could be intended as a saying separate from 6,1-6 (although *lākēn* and *'attā*,

The woe language and motifs introduced in 5,18 continue through 6,11-14, tying the entirety together. Another rhetorical technique employed to achieve cohesion here is the repetend occurring at measured intervals throughout the unit: *'amar/ne'um YHWH 'ēlōhē [has/sebā'ôt*, “says Yahweh, God of hosts” (5,27; 6,8; and 6,14).

The unit might at first glance appear to lack an ending that would signal closure; the formula *ne'um YHWH 'ēlōhē hassēbā'ôt*, which occurs in the final verse (6,14) and which could serve nicely as an appropriate conclusion, does not occur at the *end* of the verse but in its middle. Of course its present awkward position, between the vocative (“O house of Israel”) and the direct object (“a people”), may be the result of scribal error⁽²¹⁾; and Wolff, *BHS*, and others suggest that it belongs at the end of the verse, which would provide this unit with the expected conclusion⁽²²⁾. It is more likely, however, that the present placement of the formula simply reflects intentional artistic variation (cf. the similar positioning of the formula in 6,8 and elsewhere in the prophetic literature)⁽²³⁾. Its occurrence here would signal closure for the Hebrew audience.

I Am Neither a Prophet, Nor the Son of a Prophet (7,1–8,3)

Chapter 7,1 introduces Amos' collection of vision reports with the words *kōh hir'anī 'ādōnāy YHWH wēhinneh*, “Thus the Lord Yahweh showed me, and behold ...”. The abrupt shift in genre from woe-oracle to vision report would signal the beginning of a new major unit for the listener⁽²⁴⁾. The series of structured vision reports

the verse's first two words, do normally introduce a new phase of an accusation; viz., the announcement of sentencing; or whether 6,8-10 and 6,11-14 indeed echo 5,18-20 and 5,21-25.

(21) The formula is omitted altogether in some manuscripts of LXX; while Vaticanus, Hexapla, Origen, and other witnesses reflect variations of the MT both in wording and in position in the verse; cf. WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 286. PAUL, *Amos*, 221, favors MT.

(22) WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 286.

(23) The *ne'um YHWH* formula frequently occurs in the next-to-last clause of a prophetic discourse to mark closure of the discourse; e.g., Isa 37,34; Jer 21,14; 27,22; 28,4; 29,32; 30,17; 45,5; Ezek 18,32; cf. Isa 31,9; Ezek 14,16.18.20.

(24) *Ibid.*, 294; EISSFELDT, *Introduction*, 398; CHILDS, *Introduction*, 404; LIMBURG, “Sevenfold Structures”, 218; WENDLAND, “Organization of Amos”, 19-21; SMITH, *Amos*, 215; VAN DER WAL, “Structure of Amos”, 107-108; and others.

that commences in 7,1 would confirm the impression of a new unit; as would three additional shifts: (1) the transition from poetry (which has characterized the book to this point) to prose; (2) the shift from words of Yahweh (which comprise almost the entirety of chs. 1-6) to narrative; and (3) the shift (for the first time in the book) to first person narration from the prophet's own perspective ("he showed me, ... I said, ... I beseech you").

Although the fourth vision (8,1-3) is separated from the first three (7,1-3.4-6.7-9) by the episodal material of 7,10-17, several rhetorical techniques have been employed to tie these four vision reports together⁽²⁵⁾. First, they are all similarly constructed in their first portions. Each is introduced by *kōh hir'anī 'ādōnāy YHWH w^ehinneh* (except *'ādōnāy YHWH* is missing in the MT of 7,7)⁽²⁶⁾, followed by a report of what the prophet saw.

Moreover, as Andersen and Freedman⁽²⁷⁾ have noted, there is a progression among the four visions from longest to shortest. Each successive vision description is shorter than the preceding one: the first report contains 18 words; the second, 13; the third, 8; and the fourth, 3.

Another pattern that encompasses all four visions is discernable. In the first two reports the prophet sees the vision and intercedes (7,2.5); and in both cases Yahweh relents (7,3.6). In the third and fourth visions, on the other hand, the prophet's report is followed by Yahweh's question, Amos' response, and Yahweh's explanation of the vision (7,8; 8,2). The last two visions have no intercession by Amos, and no relenting by Yahweh. Therefore the visions proceed from less ominous to more ominous; from potential judgment to certain judgment. (The technique of pairing here hearkens back to the pairing seen in chs. 1-2.)

⁽²⁵⁾ See H. G. REVENTLOW, *Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos* (Göttingen 1962) 30-31; H. GROSCH, *Der Prophet Amos* (Gütersloh 1969) 46 (who notes the pairing of Visions 1 and 2, and Visions 3 and 4); MAAG, *Text des Buches Amos*, 43-44.

⁽²⁶⁾ See ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 612; and PAUL, *Amos*, 224, for support of MT; cf. REVENTLOW, *Amos*, 36-37; commentators who propose the inclusion of the phrase here include T. H. ROBINSON - F. HORST, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (Tübingen 1954) 98; RUDOLPH, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, 234; MAAG, *Text des Buches Amos*, 44; etc.

⁽²⁷⁾ ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 619.

The structured and formulaically-introduced series of vision reports that continues from 7,1 through 8,3 would signal the cohesiveness of 7,1–8,3 for the listener, despite the eight-verse narrative interlude in 7,10-17⁽²⁸⁾. Of course the question must be asked, why has the disruptive narrative episode of Amos' confrontation at Bethel been inserted into the series of visions? Or, assuming that the author/editor had a reason to include the episode somewhere in this unit, why was it inserted between the third and fourth visions?

Perhaps the most likely reason for the narrative's inclusion *at all* is that Amos, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, and other prophets, wished to include in his work a revealing sample of Israel's response to his warnings. In Jeremiah such narratives function primarily to provide further condemnatory evidence supporting Yahweh's case against Judah by relating instances in which Judah's leaders and people spurned Yahweh's prophet. The vignette in 7,10-17 certainly serves a similar purpose for Amos.

Presumably the episode was placed in this unit instead of elsewhere in the book because of its affinity with the other material in this unit. Like the visions reports, it belongs to the narrative genre and recounts, like the vision reports, dialogue between the prophet and another party.

As for its positioning within the unit, the narrative, featuring Amos' confrontation with Jeroboam's high priest at the Israelite sanctuary of Bethel, naturally follows the concluding line of the third vision (7,9): "The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword". Furthermore, the narrative is rhetorically tied to the third vision⁽²⁹⁾. The declarations of doom in v. 9b ("I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword") and v. 17b ("and Israel will surely go into exile away from its land") form a rhetorical envelope around the narrative, with the two utterances combined in Amaziah's report to Jeroboam in v. 11: "Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel will go into exile away from its land'".

(28) On the other hand, the brief vision of 9,1a is not adequately linked with the visions of 7,1–8,3; it has an entirely different form and structure, is much briefer, and is too distant from the collection to have been connected to these in the minds of the listeners; see ANDERSEN – FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 679.

(29) *Ibid.*, 760-761.

The entire unit, therefore, contains five parts: four vision reports plus the narrative. The narrative, considerably longer than any of the other four parts, is itself composed of three units, each approximately the same length as each of the vision reports (Amaziah's report to Jeroboam, vv.10-11; Amaziah's address to Amos, vv.12-13; and Amos' prophecy against Amaziah and Israel, vv.14-17). The three speech reports plus the four vision reports create a total of seven parts of approximately equal length in this unit, which would seem fortuitous except for Amos' predilection for heptadic structuring.

The progression begun in the first unit is continued in this unit: the succession of worsening judgments, culminating in the lamentation and condemnatory woe-oracle, is now completed by an account of Israel's calloused spurning of all these prophetic warnings, and by Amos' visions that portray the transition from the possibility of mercy to the sealing of Israel's doom.

The end of this unit (8,3), similar to that of the previous unit (6,14), is marked by a concluding *ne'um* 'ādōnāy YHWH, which, like the former, occurs in the middle of the concluding verse. The absence of any other *ne'um*-formulas between 6,14 and 8,3 would reinforce the listener's sense of closure here. Also, the final word of the line (if textually sound), *hās*, "Silence!", might function as an additional (and rhetorically dramatic) concluding word.

In That Day I Will Raise Up the Booth of David That Is Fallen
(8,4-9,15)

Chapter 8,4 heralds the beginning of another major unit by the conventional signal: *šim'û* + direct object containing "this" + vocative identifying the addressees (8,4-6)⁽³⁰⁾. In addition to the concluding *ne'um*-formula in 8,3 and the introductory *šim'û*-formula in 8,4, the genre shift from vision report to prophetic discourse and the shift from addressing Israel in third person to second person would further signal the beginning of a new unit for the audience.

Chapter 8,4ff. includes a variety of sayings, including a series of condemnatory appellatives identifying the unit's addressees (8,4-6), a prediction of doom (8,7-10), a prediction of famine for the word of

⁽³⁰⁾ STUART, *Hosea-Jonah*, 367-370, recognizes 8,4 as the beginning of a new major unit in Amos.

God (8,11-14), a brief vision report and message of doom (9,1-4), a hymnic piece (9,5-6), a note of hope for a remnant (9,7-10), and a message of future restoration (9,11-15). Despite the variety, and despite source-critical questions regarding some of these sayings, the rhetorical devices within 8,4-9,15 suggest that the (final) author/editor intended this entire section to be taken as a single major unit⁽³¹⁾.

The cohesion of the material is achieved in part by the recurring phrases *bayyôm hahû'*, "in that day", and *hinneh yāmîm bā'im*, "behold, days are coming" (8,9.11.13; 9,11.13). The latter expression occurs nowhere else in the book, and *bayyôm hahû'* occurs only twice elsewhere (2,16; 8,3). The author/editor also ties this unit together rhetorically, as in the third unit, by the measured, periodic repetition of *ne'um* ['ādōnāy] *YHWH* (8,9.11; 9,7.8.12.13). Furthermore, the material is thematically united by its completely future-oriented perspective (the appellatives of 8,4-6 and the hymnic piece in 9,5-6 do not disrupt this perspective). This orientation is formally communicated not only through the periodic repetition of the expressions "in that day" and "the days are coming", but also by the almost unbroken succession of first-person declarations of divine future actions. Within these twenty-six verses Yahweh states twenty-four times, "I will ...".

The internal structure of this final unit is obscure, made more difficult by textual and exegetical uncertainties. The various sayings of the unit may possibly be intended to form a sevenfold chiasm with the hymn at the center:

1. Yahweh will cause the land to be completely disrupted because of the sinful deeds of its greedy people (8,4-8); theme of Israelites skimping on sale of agricultural products
2. Yahweh will bring darkness, mourning, and famine upon Israel (8,9-14); introduced by *bayyôm hahû'*; ends: "they will fall (*nāpal*) and not rise again (*qûm*)"

⁽³¹⁾ Most would see 8,4-9,15 as composed of at least three separate units (many taking 9,11-15 a secondary addition); e.g., WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 321-355; SMITH, *Amos*, 252-280; STUART, *Hosea-Jonah*, 382-400; cf. WENDLAND, "Organization of Amos", 22-26. LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 218, however, on the somewhat tenuous basis of divine speech formula patterns, considers 8,4-9,15 a single major unit.

3. No escaping Yahweh's judgment; his punishment will be complete (9,1-4) (seven bi-cola bracketed by lines with *hereb* and *hārag* + one summary line); killing *by the sword*; "I will command" (*šawweh*); theme: wherever they flee, Yahweh will find and kill them; ends: "I will set my eyes against them"
4. Hymnic piece (9,5-6)
5. Although Yahweh's judgment will be thorough, it will not be utter: no righteous person will be punished ("no pebble of grain will fall to the grain") (9,7-10); dying *by the sword*; "I will command" (*šawweh*); theme: Yahweh will scatter Israel throughout the nations, and all the sinners will die; begins: "the eyes of Yahweh are against..."
6. Yahweh will restore devastated Israel (9,11-12); introduced by *bayyôm hahû*; begins: "I will cause to rise (*qûm*, Hiphil) the booth of David that has fallen (*nāpal*)"
7. Yahweh will restore his people Israel and the fertility of the land; the mountains and hills will flow with wine (9,13-15); theme of Yahweh's bounteous supply of agricultural products⁽³²⁾.

This final unit thematically culminates the linear progression of Amos' presentation. With the completion of Amos' words of condemnation, warning, and pleading — all of it spurned by Israel in the next-to-last unit — the final unit focuses entirely upon the future, with Yahweh's coming actions towards Israel presented in a tone of inevitability and finality. These actions are both negative and positive. On the one hand, the present generation of Israelites will be surely and severely judged. On the other hand, a righteous remnant will be spared, and one day there will be a glorious restoration — an announcement positioned, not surprisingly, at the end of the book, following an organizational convention commonly used in the prophets.

⁽³²⁾ This analysis is appealing but open to further scrutiny. Chapter 8,9-10 could be intended as a sub-unit separate from vv.11-14; 9,11-12 might form an integral part of 9,11-15; and the correspondences between 8,4-8 and 9,13-15, and between 8,9-14 and 9,11-12, are weak.

As in the third unit, the author/editor uses the *ne'um*-formula here to punctuate the unit's various sayings and therefore needs another formula for marking the conclusion of the entire unit. He selects an expanded form of the formula closing the fourth unit: *'amar YHWH 'ēlōhēkā*, "says Yahweh your God" (9,15). It is probably not coincidental that, counting this final formula, there are seven divine saying formulas in the unit (as there were in the third unit).

It appears, therefore, that the book of Amos consists of seven major units, each demarcated by aurally-sensitive signals⁽³³⁾. An overall septenary structure for the whole book should not be surprising since heptadic structuring is common on the secondary level, as has been shown (i.e., most, if not all, the book's major units comprise seven parts). Moreover, there are over twenty examples in the book of septenaries on the microstructural level⁽³⁴⁾. It is clear that the author/editor of Amos has a predilection towards organizing his material into sevens.

(³³) LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 218, 222, likewise argues that Amos is composed of seven parts. His analysis, based mainly on the distribution of divine speech formulas, differs from the one presented here in two respects: (1) he identifies 1,1-2 as the book's first unit (which seems unlikely, since v. 1 is the book's title and the remaining verse could hardly be considered one of the book's seven major units); (2) he joins 5,1-17 and 5,18-6,14 into a single unit, which is unlikely in light of recent rhetorical-critical analyses which have shown 5,1-17 to be a self-contained and independent unit; see arguments in WENDLAND, "Organization of Amos", 14-16; DE WAARD, "Chiastic Structure"; STUART, *Hosea-Jonah*, 344; SMITH, *Amos*, 149-160; et al.

(³⁴) LIMBURG, "Sevenfold Structures", 219-221, notes the following sevenfold groupings in Amos:

- (1) oracles against the seven nations + Israel (chs. 1-2)
- (2) the series of seven verbal clauses describing Israel's sins (they sell, trample, push, go, desecrate, spread out, drink) (2,6-8)
- (3) the seven verbal clauses expressing the inescapability of punishment (shall perish, shall not retain, shall not escape, shall not stand, shall not escape, shall not escape, shall flee) (2,14-16)
- (4) the series of seven rhetorical questions in 3,3-8
- (5) the sarcastic call to worship in 4,4-5, with seven verbs in the imperative or its equivalent (come, transgress, multiply, bring, offer, proclaim, publish)
- (6) the series of seven verbs in the first person with *-kem* suffix forms recalling Yahweh's past actions against Israel (I gave you, I withheld from

The Interrelationship of the Book's Seven Major Units

The linear thematic arrangement of the seven units has already been noted. The author/editor has also added touches to create an

you, I smote you, I sent among you, I slew ... your young men, I made a stench go up in your camp, I overthrew some of you) (4,6-12)

(7) the hymn fragment, which describes Yahweh's activities with seven verbs (who makes, turns, darkens, calls, pours, makes flash, and comes [or "brings"; cf. *BHS*]) (5,8-9)

(8) the list of seven things Yahweh does not like (feasts, solemn assemblies, burnt offerings, cereal offerings, peace offerings, noise of songs, melody of harps) (5,21-24)

(9) the seven verbs describing actions of the people against whom a woe is pronounced (who lie, stretch, eat, sing, invent, drink, anoint) (6,4-6)

(10) the seven things the wealthy say ("that we may sell, offer to sell, make small, make great, deal deceitfully, buy, sell") (8,4-8)

(11) the seven punishing acts of Yahweh, presented in seven statements employing verbs in first person singular or its syntactic equivalent (I will slay; my hand will take; I will bring down; I will search out and take them; I will command; I will command; I will set) (9,1-4).

To this list could be added others:

(12) the seven classes of military that will not escape (the swift; the strong, the warriors, the archers, the infantry, the chariotry, the mighty); 2,14-16 (cf. ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 340)

(13) Yahweh's coming punishment of Israel, presented in seven verbal clauses (punish, punish, be cut off, fall, smite, perish, come to an end); 3,14-15 (seen also by ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 410)

(14) the seven plagues enumerated in 4,6-11 (famine, drought, blight, locusts, pestilence, sword, and "overthrow" (or earthquake? or fire? cf. ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 440, 447, for enumeration)

(15) the call to repentance, using seven verbs of exhortation (seek, live, don't seek, don't come, don't go, seek, live) (5,4-6a)

(16) the condemnation of Israel in 5,10-13, composed of seven bi-cola

(17) the exhortation in 5,14-15, containing seven verbs of exhortation or promise (seek, you will live, it will be, hate, love, establish, he will be gracious)

(18) the series of seven participles/woes in 6,1-6 (ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 545-549)

(19) the seven occurrences of the name "Israel" in 7,9-17 (ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 637) — although this may be fortuitous

(20) the seven lines comprising the 'im ... miššam series in 9,2a-4a (see ANDERSEN - FREEDMAN, *Amos*, 681)

(21) the list of seven good things that Yahweh will do for Israel in the future, described with seven verbs in the first person singular (I will raise up, repair, raise up, build, restore, plant, give) (9,11-15)

(22) the list of seven things Israel will do or not do in the last days, presented with seven verbs in the third person plural (they will build, dwell, plant, drink, make, eat, and not be plucked up) (9,14-15).

overall symmetrical (A-B-C-D-C'-B'-A') pattern, presumably to assist memory and/or to conform to popular rhetorical convention, by devising easily perceived points of correspondence between chiasmatically-matching units⁽³⁵⁾. For example, numerous lexical and thematic correspondences are employed to link the first and last units, correspondences that would hardly be missed upon a Hebrew audience:

(1) Yahweh's dealings with Syria, Philistia, and Edom are addressed in both units (1,3-8.11-12; 9,7.12), and nowhere else in the book.

(2) Both units list seven sins of the wealthy (2,6-8; 8,4-6). In the first, the wealthy are condemned because "they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes" (*'ebyôn ba'ābûr na'ālāyim*, 2,6); in the last, they are condemned because "they buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes" (*'ebyôn ba'ābûr na'ālāyim*, 8,6). In the first, the wealthy are "those who trample (*haššō'āpîm*) the head of the poor" (2,7); while in the last they are "those who trample (*haššō'āpîm*) the needy" (8,4; this verb occurs nowhere else in Amos).

(3) Both units feature a series portraying the inescapability of the coming judgment (2,14-16; 9,1-4). Chapter 2,14-15 declares three times that particular groups of warriors "will not escape" (*lō' yemallēṭ*); while according to 9,1 the fugitive "will not escape" (*lō' yimmalēṭ*; this verb occurs nowhere else in Amos). The root *nûs*, "fleeing", occurs twice in the 2,14-15 and twice in 9,1.

(4) Yahweh's assertion in 2,10, "I brought you up out of Egypt", is repeated almost verbatim in 9,7, "Did I not bring you up out of Egypt?"

(5) Yahweh's threat that "the people of Aram will go into exile to Kir" in 1,5 has its reflex in 9,7: "I brought Aram from Kir".

(6) The reference to "the top of Carmel" (*rō'sh hakkarmel*) in 1,2 is echoed exactly in 9,3 (Carmel is not mentioned anywhere else in the book).

⁽³⁵⁾ A chiasmic structure of the entire book has also been suggested by J. DE WAARD-W. A. SMALLEY, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Amos* (Stuttgart 1979) 194-195; cf. SMALLEY, "Recursion Patterns", 118-127. The main differences between their analysis and the one proposed here primarily involve unit boundary identifications and the number of units (twenty, in their analysis).

(7) Other correspondences include references to “drinking wine” (2,8.12; 9,13.14); planting/uprooting (2,9; 9,14-15); and the “sword” (1,11; 9,4.10).

The second and penultimate units also correspond, although the linkage is not as extensively developed. Both focus on the prophet and the responsibility and importance of prophesying. The series of rhetorical questions in 3,3-8 moves towards the prophetic call and compulsion to prophesy in 3,7-8. Likewise, the narrative in 7,10-17 centers upon the validity of Amos’ responsibility — indeed, compulsion — to prophesy. Another possible correspondence involves Amos’ prediction of the destruction of the altar of Bethel and the royal “houses” of Israel in 3,13-15, which is mirrored in 7,9-12, when he declares at Bethel that “the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste” and the Lord “will rise against the house of Jeroboam”.

The third and fifth units are more rigorously linked:

(1) The third unit is addressed to “the cows of Bashan who are in the mountain of Samaria” (4,1) — i.e., the wealthy women of Samaria; while the fifth is addressed to “those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria” (6,1) — i.e., the wealthy men of Samaria.

(2) Both units condemn the wealthy aristocrats who idly drink (4,1; 6,6).

(3) The former unit declares that the wealthy women will all go into captivity (4,3); while the latter declares that the wealthy men will go into captivity (6,7). In both, the exile is said to be in the direction of Damascus (4,3; 5,27, if Harmon refers to Mt. Hermon, as Wolff argues)⁽³⁶⁾.

(4) Both units graphically depict the empty religious activities of the Israelites, which include, in both instances, sacrifices and offerings rejected by Yahweh (4,4-5; 5,21-23). In the former, these activities are what Israel “loves” to do (4,5); in the latter, these activities are “hated” and “despised” by Yahweh (5,21).

(5) In the former, Yahweh turns the morning into darkness (4,13); in the latter, the day of the Lord will be a day of darkness, not light (5,18.20).

⁽³⁶⁾ WOLFF, *Joel and Amos*, 204, 207.

(6) The dramatic declaration, *nišba' 'ădōnāy YHWH b'e...ô*, "The Lord Yahweh has sworn by his [holiness/soul]", occurs in both units (4,2; 6,8).

At the center of the book stands the unit featuring Amos' call to repentance, which, as already discussed, is itself arranged in a chiasm. The overall symmetrical arrangement of these seven units could be represented as in the accompanying diagram.

Symmetrical Arrangement of the Seven Major Units of Amos

1. Coming Judgment upon Israel and Her Neighbors (Chs. 1-2)
 - a. Condemnation of the wealthy; sevenfold listing of sins
 - b. "They sell the righteous for silver, the needy for a pair of shoes" (*'ebyôn ba'ăbûr na'ălāyim*)
 - c. The wealthy are "those who trample (*haššô'ăpîm*) the poor" (2,7)
 - d. Inescapability of judgment, with sevenfold presentation (2,14-16)
 - e. Warriors "will not escape" (*lô' y'eṣallē?*); theme of "fleeing" (*nûs*)
 - f. "I brought you up out of Egypt" (2,10)
 - g. Philistines; Edom; Yahweh will exile Aram to Kir (1,5)
 - h. "The top of Carmel" (*rô's hakkarmel*) (1,2)
 - i. Figures of drinking wine, planting and uprooting, the sword, etc.
2. Coming Destruction of Israel, Including Bethel's Cult Center; Prophet's Responsibility to Prophecy Because of Yahweh's Revelation (Ch. 3)
 - a. Issue of the prophet and function of prophesying; when Yahweh speaks, his prophets must prophesy
 - b. Bethel's altars will be demolished (3,14)
 - c. Prediction of the destruction of the royal "houses" (3,15)
3. Condemnation of Wealthy Israelite Women (Who Are to Be Exiled), Empty Religious Activity; Yahweh's Past and Approaching Judgment (Ch. 4)
 - a. To "the cows of Bashan who are in the mountain of Samaria"
 - b. Condemnation of wealthy women who idly drink (4,1)

- c. Prediction: the wealthy women will all go into exile (4,3)
 - d. Exile will be toward Harmon (Hermon?) (4,3)
 - e. Empty religious activities depicted, including various sacrifices and offerings (4,4-5)
 - f. Israel "loves" these activities (4,5)
 - g. Yahweh is coming; he turns morning into darkness (4,12-13)
4. Lament and Call to Repentance (5,1-17)
5. Woe Oracle: Condemnation of Wealthy Israelite Men (Who Are to Be Exiled), Empty Religious Activity; Coming Judgment (5,18-6,14)
- a. To "those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria" (6,1)
 - b. Condemnation of wealthy men who drink wine (6,6)
 - c. Prediction: the wealthy men will be first into exile (6,7)
 - d. Exile will be "beyond Damascus" (5,27)
 - e. Empty religious activities depicted, including various sacrifices and offerings (5,21-23)
 - f. Yahweh "hates" and "despises" these activities (5,21)
 - g. The day of Yahweh will be darkness, not light (5,18.20)
6. Visions of Coming Judgment; Amos' at the Cult Center of Bethel and His Responsibility to Prophecy Because of Yahweh's Call (7,1-8,3)
- a. Issue of the prophet and function of prophesying; Yahweh has spoken to Amos; therefore he prophesies
 - b. Amos prophesies at Bethel: Israel's sanctuaries to be destroyed
 - c. Yahweh will rise against Jeroboam's "house" with a sword (7,9)
7. Israel's Future among the Nations: Coming Judgment (Scattering among the Nations) and Future Restoration (Possessing a Neighboring Nation) (8,4-9,15)
- a. Condemnation of the wealthy; sevenfold listing of sins
 - b. "They buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of shoes" (*'ebyôn ba'ābûr na'ālāyim*)

- c. The wealthy are "those who trample (*haššō'āpîm*) the needy" (8,4)
- d. Inescapability of judgment, with sevenfold presentation (9,1-4)
- e. Fugitives "will not escape" (*lō' yimmalēṭ*); theme of "fleeing" (*nûs*)
- f. "Did I not bring you up out of Egypt?" (9,7)
- g. Philistines; Edom; Yahweh brought Aram from Kir (9,7)
- h. "The top of Carmel" (*rō's hakkarmel*)
- i. Figures of drinking wine, planting and uprooting, the sword, etc.

Conclusion

Many rhetorical-structural questions in Amos remain and invite further investigation. For example, one wonders whether the forensic particle *lākēn*, "therefore", followed by *kōh* ("thus") or *'attâ* ("now"), serves a structural function in Amos since it introduces the final or nearly final sayings in each of the book's five central units (3,11; 4,12; 5,16; 6,7; 7,17). The internal organizations of the book's fifth and seventh units call for closer scrutiny. The same could be said for the internal structures of the many smaller sevenfold groupings in the book, virtually none of which is chiastic.

Despite questions and uncertainties, however, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the literary architecture of Amos. A great deal of deliberate and well-conceived structural designing appears to have been involved in the final formation of the book. Particularly noteworthy are the many aurally-oriented structuring techniques devised to aid the listening audience, including strategically positioned signals marking the beginnings and ends of major units, and the wide variety of audience-sensitive rhetorical techniques employed to achieve cohesion and to convey structure within each unit. The use of septenary patterns is surprisingly extensive. Heptadic structuring is utilized in the organization of the book's major units, its secondary units, and even material on the microstructural level. Perhaps most importantly, many of the seeming structural anomalies in Amos, such as the hymnic pieces, the three "secondary" strophes in the oracles against the nations, the interruptive Bethel narrative, the message of hope in 9,11-15, the

abrupt genre shifts, and the disjunction of thematically related sayings, appear to serve crucial functions in rhetorically-oriented structural patterns.

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SOMMAIRE

Dans la perspective de l'intérêt grandissant pour «l'oralité résiduelle» dans les textes anciens, cet article examine les procédés oraux/auditifs de structuration utilisés dans le livre d'Amos pour guider l'auditoire. Dans Amos, méritent une attention particulière les signaux situés en position stratégique pour indiquer le début et la fin de grandes unités, ainsi qu'une grande variété de techniques rhétoriques de genre auditif, employées pour assurer la cohésion et manifester la structure à l'intérieur de chaque unité. L'utilisation de schémas septénaires est d'une fréquence surprenante. Certaines particularités, qui semblent être des anomalies dans la structure, telles que l'insertion de fragments hymniques ou de matériau narratif, les changements brusques de genre et la disjonction de passages thématiquement apparentés, se révèlent dotées de fonctions cruciales en des schémas de structure dont la base est rhétorique.

The Progressive Narrative Pattern of Mark 14,53–16,8

In what follows we shall illustrate the dynamic narrative progression formed by the nine scenes concluding Mark's Gospel in Mark 14,53–16,8⁽¹⁾. We shall demonstrate how these scenes are arranged in a progression of literary "sandwiches" in which each successive scene is contrastingly framed by two other mutually related scenes⁽²⁾. The entire complex, as we shall see, operates as an "architecture in motion, assembled as it goes"⁽³⁾. And we shall examine how this pattern of alternation or "interchange"⁽⁴⁾, determines how the implied reader/audience is to respond to and interpret the total progression of events involved in the Marcan presentation of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ For an explanation of the narrative-critical approach that we will follow, see M.A. POWELL, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis 1990).

⁽²⁾ For a discussion of the literary device of "sandwiching", see J.R. EDWARDS, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives", *NT* 31 (1989) 193-216.

⁽³⁾ R. ALTER, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (New York 1989) 153: "Literary structure is not only dynamic — one might say architecture in motion, assembled as it goes — but also is constituted of heterogeneous elements (sound, imagery, diction, motifs, syntax, and so forth). This means that many poems, many narrative and dramatic works, have complex structures produced by the interaction of different heterogeneous elements".

⁽⁴⁾ D.R. BAUER, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSS 31; Sheffield 1988) 18, draws a distinction between "intercalation" as "the insertion of one literary unit in the midst of another literary unit (a, b, a)" and "interchange" as "the exchanging or alternation of certain elements (a, b, a, b, a)". He points out that "interchange is often used to strengthen contrasts or comparisons". Our proposed narrative progression for Mark 14,53–16,8 thus involves both "intercalation" and "interchange".

⁽⁵⁾ This article complements J.P. HEIL, "Mark 14,1-52: Narrative Structure and Reader-Response", *Bib* 71 (1990) 305-332. Similar narrative progressions are operative in the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel; see J.P. HEIL, "Matthew 27:55-28:20: Narrative Structure and Reader-Response", *JBL* 110 (1991) 419-438; id., *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26-28* (Minneapolis 1991).

I. Literary Structure of Mark 14,53–16,8

We begin with a chart of the progression of literary sandwiches formed by the nine scenes in Mark 14,53–16,8:

- (1) 14,53-72: Jesus and Peter are questioned before high priest.
 - A¹ 14,53-54 Peter follows while Jesus is led to high priest.
 - B¹ 14,55-65 Jesus admits his divine Sonship to high priest.
 - A² 14,66-72 Peter denies Jesus in courtyard of high priest.
- (2) 15,1-32: The innocent Jesus is crucified as true King.
 - B² 15,1-5 Jesus admits his kingship to Pilate.
 - A³ 15,6-15 Crowd demands death of Jesus, their true King.
 - B³ 15,16-32 Jesus' kingship is mocked by Gentiles and Jews.
- (3) 15,33–16,8: Women witness Jesus' death, burial, resurrection.
 - A⁴ 15,33-41 Centurion confesses Jesus' Sonship as women watch.
 - B⁴ 15,42-47 Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus as women watch.
 - A⁵ 16,1-8 Women receive revelation of Jesus' resurrection.

The nine scenes comprising Mark 14,53–16,8 can be divided into three sets of intercalations. In the first set Jesus' admission of his divine sonship to the high priest in 14,55-65 is framed between the mutually related scenes of Peter's following while Jesus is led to the high priest in 14,53-54 and of Peter's denial of Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest in 14,66-72. References to the high priest (14,53.54.60.61.63.66) unify these three scenes and distinguish them from the subsequent scenes of the Gospel in which the high priest does not appear. These references to the high priest also serve as a criterion for the division into these three scenes. Although the high priest is mentioned in the first and third scenes, he acts only in the second scene.

The contrasting positions of Peter in the courtyard "of the high priest" (τοῦ ἀρχιερέως) but sitting "before the fire" (πρὸς τὸ φῶς) (14,54) rather than "before the high priest" (πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα) like Jesus (14,53) serve as the focal point that unifies the first scene. That the high priest is mentioned but does not act plus the appearance of Peter distinguish the first scene (14,53-54) from the second (14,55-65) in which the high priest acts and Peter does not appear.

The second scene develops the position of Jesus relative to the high priest and the Jewish leaders, as introduced in the first scene (14,53). That this scene begins with the attempt of the Jewish leaders to put Jesus to death (θανατῶσαι) (14,55) and they all condemn him as worthy of death (θανάτου) (14,64) before the scene closes

establishes its unity. The actions of the high priest toward Jesus (14,60.61.63) and the absence of Peter distinguish the second scene (14,55-65) from the third (14,66-72) in which Peter is the main actor while the high priest and Jesus are mentioned but do not act.

The third scene begins where the first scene ended — with the position of Peter relative to the high priest and Jesus (14,54). As Peter was “in the courtyard of the high priest” (εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως) “warming himself” (θερμαινόμενος) in the first scene, so in the third scene he is still below “in the courtyard” (ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ) (14,66) “warming himself” (θερμαινόμενον) (14,67) as one of the maids “of the high priest” (τοῦ ἀρχιερέως) sees him (14,66). The appearances of Peter (14,66.67.70.72) and his three denials of Jesus, who is absent from the scene, unify the third scene and distinguish it from the fourth (15,1-5) in which Jesus reappears without Peter.

Because they involve the position that a previous follower takes toward the death of Jesus, the first and third scenes are A scenes. The second scene is a B scene, since it involves the Jewish leaders bringing about the death of the innocent Jesus.

In the second set of three scenes the crowd's demand for the crucifixion of the innocent Jesus as their “king” in 15,6-15 is sandwiched between the mutually related scenes of Jesus' admission of his kingship to Pilate in 15,1-5 and of the mockery of Jesus' kingship by Gentiles and Jews in 15,16-32. References to Jesus as “king” (15,2.9.12.18.26.32) unify these three scenes and distinguish them from the preceding (14,53-72) and subsequent scenes (15,33–16,8) in which Jesus is not explicitly referred to as a king⁽⁶⁾. These references to Jesus' kingship also serve as a criterion for the division into these three scenes.

That the “chief priests” and the “whole Sanhedrin” (together with the elders and scribes) deliver Jesus to Pilate at the beginning of the fourth scene (15,1-5) links it with the second scene (14,55-65) in which the “chief priests” and the “whole Sanhedrin” seek testimony against Jesus to put him to death (14,55). Like the second, this fourth scene is a B scene that involves Jewish and now also gentile

(6) While F.J. MATERA, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15* (SBLDS 66; Chico 1982) 61, proposes “that the overall theme of chapter 15 is the ‘Kingship of Jesus’”, it should be noted that the word “king” (βασιλεύς) occurs only within 15,1-32.

authority accomplishing the death of the innocent Jesus. References to Pilate (15,1.2.4.5) establish the unity of the fourth scene⁽⁷⁾. That Pilate addresses Jesus as “king of the Jews” (15,2) distinguishes this fourth scene from the fifth in which Pilate converses with the crowd about Jesus as “king of the Jews” (15,9.12).

Occurrences of the verb “release” (ἀπολύω) at the beginning (15,6), middle (15,9.11), and end (15,15) of the fifth scene define its unity. These occurrences together with the references to Barabbas (15,7.11.15) and to the “crowd” (ὄχλος) (15,8.11.15) distinguish the fifth scene (15,6-15) from the fourth (15,1-5) and sixth (15,16-32) scenes in which these words do not appear. The fifth scene is an A scene because it concerns the position that the “crowd”, who had followed Jesus throughout the previous narrative, now takes toward the death of Jesus⁽⁸⁾. Whereas Peter, a previous close follower, now follows from a distance and denies Jesus in the first two A scenes (14,53-54.66-72), the crowd, at the instigation of the chief priests (15,11), now demands the death of Jesus (15,13-15).

Mockeries of the kingship of Jesus (15,18.26.32) define the unity of the sixth scene (15,16-32)⁽⁹⁾. That the soldiers and Jewish

⁽⁷⁾ O. GENEST, *Le Christ de la passion – Perspective structurale: Analyse de Marc 14,53–15,47, des parallèles bibliques et extra-bibliques* (Recherches 21 Théologie; Montreal-Tournai 1978) 29-53, and C. MYERS, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY 1988) 374-378, fail to recognize this and the above criteria for our division into scenes, as they treat 14,53–15,1 as a unity.

⁽⁸⁾ We cannot agree with M.A. TOLBERT, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Rhetorical Perspective* (Minneapolis 1989) 278, n. 13, who states: “It is probably closer to the conventional expectations of the authorial audience to view the crowds as a narrative chorus whose main function is to reflect whatever action is dominating the story at the moment ... than to see them as a character group in Mark who supported Jesus earlier but who now with great fickleness turn against him”. That the crowds are an important character group around Jesus not only in Galilee but in Jerusalem is evident by their appearances in 2,4.13; 3,9.20.32; 4,1.36; 5,21.24.27.30.31; 6,34.45; 7,14.17.33; 8,1.2.6.34; 9,14.15.17.25; 10,1.46; 11,18.32; 12,12.37. For the role of the crowds in Mark 1–4, see J.P. HEIL, “Reader-Response and the Narrative Context of the Parables about Growing Seed in Mark 4:1-34”, *CBQ* 54 (1992) 271-286.

⁽⁹⁾ This unifying criterion of the kingship is neglected by D. SENIOR, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Wilmington 1984) 112-121, who divides 15,16-32 into three scenes: 15,16-20a; 15,20b-24; 15,25-32, by MYERS, *Binding*, 378-382, who treats 15,2-20 as a unit, and by GENEST, *Le Christ*, who treats 15,1-21 as a structural section.

leaders mock the kingship of Jesus in this scene distinguishes it from the fifth scene (15,6-15) in which Pilate mocks the kingship and from the seventh scene (15,33-41) in which kingship is not explicitly mocked⁽¹⁰⁾. Since the soldiers crucify Jesus in the sixth scene (15,20.24.25), it continues the theme of the second and fourth scenes — the accomplishment of Jesus' death by the authorities, and is therefore a B scene.

In the third set of three scenes Joseph of Arimathea's burial of Jesus as the women watch in 15,42-47 is sandwiched between the mutually related scenes of the centurion's confession of the dying Jesus' divine sonship as the women watch in 15,33-41 and of the women's reception of the divine revelation of Jesus' resurrection in 16,1-8. References to the "women" (15,40-41.47; 16,1) unify this intercalation and distinguish it from the previous scenes in which the women do not appear. These references to the women as well as temporal notices serve as criteria for the division into these three scenes.

That the seventh scene (15,33-41) takes place during the "ninth hour" (15,34) after the notice that "at the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour" (15,33) establishes its unity and separates it from the eighth scene (15,42-47) which occurs "when it was already evening" on the day of preparation before the sabbath (15,42). The presence of three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome (15,40), along with all the other women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (15,41) further distinguishes the seventh from the eighth scene in which only two women, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses (15,47) are present⁽¹¹⁾. Since it involves the position that women followers from Galilee take toward Jesus' death, the seventh is an A scene.

⁽¹⁰⁾ This distinguishing criterion of the kingship is ignored by TOLBERT, *Sowing the Gospel*, 279-288, who treats 15,16-39 as an integral scene, by MYERS, *Binding*, 384-389, who treats 15,21-32 as a unit, and by GENEST, *Le Christ*, 97-121, who treats 15,22-47 as a structural section.

⁽¹¹⁾ B. L. MACK, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia 1988) 309, and TOLBERT, *Sowing the Gospel*, 288-299, begin a new narrative section with the introduction of the women in 15,40. This ignores the role of the women as witnesses to the death of Jesus in 15,33-41 and the beginning of a new scene with the temporal notice in 15,42.

That the eighth scene occurs on the evening of the preparation day before the sabbath establishes its unity and separates it from the ninth scene (16,1-8) which occurs "when the sabbath was over" (16,1) "very early on the first day of the week" (16,2). The presence of Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate, and only two of the women distinguishes the eighth scene from both the seventh and ninth scenes in which Joseph and Pilate do not appear and all three women are present (15,40; 16,1).

Since it concerns both Jewish (Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, 15,43) and gentile authorities (Pilate and the centurion) verifying the death of Jesus (15,43-44), the eighth scene is a B scene⁽¹²⁾. And the ninth scene is an A scene because it involves the position that the women followers from Galilee take toward the dead but now raised Jesus.

Although the above schema allows us to see the entire set of intercalations in Mark 14,53-16,8 at a glance, we must keep in mind that the nine scenes operate in a dynamic sequence. After the first sandwich, as each successive scene is heard by the implied audience, it works as "architecture in motion"⁽¹³⁾, forming another sandwich with the previous two scenes⁽¹⁴⁾. The entire complex functions for its implied audience as a progressive pattern of seven sandwiches, as illustrated by the following chart:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| (1) Mark 14,53-72: | A ¹ -B ¹ -A ² (14,66-72) |
| (2) Mark 14,55-15,5: | B ¹ -A ² -B ² (15,1-5) |
| (3) Mark 14,66-15,15: | A ² -B ² -A ³ (15,6-15) |
| (4) Mark 15,1-32: | B ² -A ³ -B ³ (15,16-32) |
| (5) Mark 15,6-41: | A ³ -B ³ -A ⁴ (15,33-41) |
| (6) Mark 15,16-47: | B ³ -A ⁴ -B ⁴ (15,42-47) |
| (7) Mark 15,33-16,8: | A ⁴ -B ⁴ -A ⁵ (16,1-8) |

But what does this sequential interchange of contrasting scenes accomplish as it is heard by the Marcan implied audience?

⁽¹²⁾ This is especially evident in 15,44 where Pilate "wondered if he were already dead (τέθνηκεν), and calling the centurion, he asked him if he had already died (ἠπέθανεν)".

⁽¹³⁾ ALTER, *Pleasures of Reading*, 153.

⁽¹⁴⁾ On the importance of keeping in mind the oral nature of the Marcan narrative, which was meant to be heard by an audience, see J. DEWEY, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark", *Int* 43 (1989) 32-44; id., "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience", *CBQ* 53 (1991) 221-236.

II. The Response of the Implied Audience to Mark 15,53–16,8

By the “implied audience” we mean the audience that the text presupposes in order to be actualized as a communicative event; it is the audience created by the text in the process of reading or listening to it⁽¹⁵⁾. By “response” we mean the “rhetorical effects” that the text produces for its implied audience⁽¹⁶⁾. In accord with this approach we will focus upon the responses of the implied audience as determined by the various presuppositions, strategies, and indicators within Mark’s narrative. More specifically, we will examine what the alternating sequential and strategic pattern of contrasting scenes in Mark 14,53–16,8 *does* to and how it *affects* its audience, that is, what this intricate narrative pattern of successive intercalations causes its listener to experience in order to produce the meaning latent in the text and thus to bring its act of communication to completion⁽¹⁷⁾.

As will become evident in what follows, the alternating scenes involve a continual contrasting of themes — the theme of positions taken toward the death of Jesus by those who had followed him (A scenes) interwoven with the theme of the Jewish leaders bringing about the death of the innocent Jesus (B scenes).

A. Mark 15,53-72: Jesus and Peter before the High Priest

1. A¹ 14,53-54: Peter follows while Jesus is led to high priest

In response to Judas’ command that after they arrest Jesus they lead him away (ἀπάγετε) securely (14,44), the crowd now leads Jesus away (ἀπήγαγον) to the high priest, whose servant’s ear was severed

⁽¹⁵⁾ For more explanation of this type of reader-response criticism, see B. C. LATEGAN, “Reference: Reception, Redescription and Reality”, *Text and Reality. Aspects of Reference in Biblical Texts* (ed. B. C. LATEGAN – W. S. VORSTER) (Atlanta 1985) 67-75; J. L. STALEY, *The Print’s First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 82; Atlanta 1988) 21-49; R. W. FUNK, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sonoma 1988) 34-38; W. S. VORSTER, “The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material”, *Reader Perspectives on the New Testament* (ed. E. V. MCKNIGHT) (Semeia 48; Atlanta 1989) 21-39.

⁽¹⁶⁾ K. A. PLANK, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta 1987) 9.

⁽¹⁷⁾ J. P. HEIL, “Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22:66-71”, *CBQ* 51 (1989) 272.

in the violence accompanying Jesus' arrest (14,47). An assembly of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish judicial body headed by the high priest, takes place as all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together (14,53), the full range of Jewish leaders who had commissioned the crowd to arrest Jesus (14,43). Now that the Jewish leaders have finally succeeded in arresting Jesus, the audience expects them to accomplish their plot to destroy him by condemning him to death (11,18; 12,12; 14,1).

Although all followers have deserted Jesus (14,50-52), Peter is still following him but "at a distance" (15,54). Peter's position toward the high priest contrasts that of Jesus. His separation from Jesus indicates that his discipleship is deteriorating. Although Peter is still following Jesus even into the courtyard of the high priest, he is no longer "with" (μετά) Jesus as befits one of the Twelve (3,14)⁽¹⁸⁾, but is sitting "with" (μετά) the guards, warming himself "before" (πρός) the fire rather than standing ready to die "with" (14,31) Jesus "before" (πρός) the high priest (14,53).

2. B¹ 14,55-65: Jesus admits his divine Sonship to high priest

In contrast to Peter, who, although he insisted he would "die with" (συναποθανεῖν, 14,31) Jesus, is now "sitting with" (συγκαθήμενος, 14,54) the guards⁽¹⁹⁾, Jesus is assailed by the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin, who seek testimony "against" (κατά, 14,55.56.57) him "to put him to death" (14,55). While Peter is "sitting", his master is being accused first by false witnesses and then by the high priest, who "stand up" (14,57.60) to oppose him.

Some of the many false witnesses claimed to have heard him say, "I will destroy this sanctuary made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands" (14,58). While Jesus never claimed that he would destroy the "sanctuary" (ναός), he did predict the destruction of all the impressive buildings of the temple

⁽¹⁸⁾ For a discussion of the significance of the twelve disciples called to be "with" Jesus, see K. STOCK, *Boten aus dem Mit-Ihm-Sein: Das Verhältnis zwischen Jesus und den Zwölf nach Markus* (AnBib 70; Rome 1975) 7-70.

⁽¹⁹⁾ The use of the two prepositions, σύν with the verb "sit" and μετά, emphasizes Peter's association "with" the guards and dissociation from Jesus.

(ἱερὸν) complex (13,1-2)⁽²⁰⁾. In so doing, Jesus had hinted at the inadequacy of the temple with its sanctuary “made by hands” to be a permanent dwelling of God and locus of genuine worship. Jesus had condemned the temple as being worthy of destruction for failing to be God’s “house of prayer for all peoples” (11,12-17.20-21). When these false witnesses transform Jesus’ prediction of the entire temple’s demise into a serious yet false accusation that *he himself* would destroy the “sanctuary” of the temple as inadequate because only “made with hands”, they are ironically developing Jesus’ prediction into a true prophecy.

The false witnesses attribute to Jesus the ludicrous boast that within three days he would build another sanctuary, one not made by hands. The “three days”, the ridiculously short period to rebuild the sanctuary, recalls the three days after which Jesus would rise from the dead in accord with his predictions (8,31; 9,31; 10,34). It is through his death and resurrection, then, that Jesus will build a sanctuary not made by hands. Through the irony of this false witness which is a true prophecy, the audience experiences the paradox that it is precisely through the death of Jesus, the aim of this false accusation, that he will exercise the divine power of his resurrection to establish a new, superior sanctuary not made by hands.

In ironic contrast to Peter, who had confessed Jesus to be the Christ (8,29), but who has now distanced himself from Jesus rather than die with him (14,54), Jesus admits to the high priest that he is “the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One”, who will come again as the triumphant Son of Man (14,61-62). After the Sanhedrin condemns him to death (14,63-64), they ridicule Jesus’ “prophecy” of his power to build the sanctuary not made by hands (14,58), his “prophecy” of his vindication as the exalted Son of Man (14,62), and thus his prophetic claim to be the Christ and Son of God (14,61). But they who have covered Jesus’ face do not see that by spitting upon him, abusing him, and mocking his power to prophesy (14,65), they are ironically fulfilling God’s plan as predicted by Jesus: “And they will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and

⁽²⁰⁾ On the distinction between “temple” and “sanctuary” in Mark, see G. BIGUZZI, “*Io distruggerò questo tempio*”: *Il tempio e il giudaismo nel vangelo di Marco* (Rome 1987).

kill him, but after three days he will rise" (10,34)⁽²¹⁾. Furthermore, Jesus' previous prophecy of Peter's denial (14,30) is in the process of being fulfilled, since Peter has associated himself with the guards (ὄπηρετῶν, 14,54), members of the same group of guards (ὄπηρέται) who are now adding to the cruel rejection of Jesus by greeting him with blows (14,65).

3. A² 14,66-72: Peter denies Jesus in courtyard of high priest

As the final scene of the first sandwich, Peter's denial of Jesus (14,66-72) not only contrasts with the middle scene (14,55-65), but also develops the theme of the opening scene (14,53-54). That Peter was below in the courtyard of the high priest, as one of the high priest's maids came (14,66), prepares the audience for a dramatic contrast with the previous scene of Jesus confessing his true Messianic identity before the high priest. Whereas the high priest, the highest ranking Jewish male, confronted Jesus with the serious question of his identity as "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One" (14,61), the maid of the high priest, a female of lesser authority, confronts Peter with the less serious question of his association with Jesus identified only as "the Nazarene" (14,67). Encountering Peter as having been with (μετὰ) Jesus, the maid underlines Peter's abandonment of his special privilege as one of the Twelve to be with (μετὰ) Jesus (3,14)⁽²²⁾.

Whereas Jesus had affirmed his true Messianic identity to the high priest (14,62), to the maid of the high priest Peter denies his special association "with" the Jesus (14,68) he earlier confessed to be the Christ (8,29). Peter's double denial of neither knowing nor understanding resounds as an ironic understatement. Peter truly does not understand what is involved in "being with" Jesus as one of the Twelve disciples, namely, to deny oneself and follow with Jesus on his way to suffering and death (8,31-38). Despite his promise to die with Jesus (14,31), Peter neither knows nor understands his discipleship. As he went out (ἐξῆλθεν ἔξω) into the outer court, Peter develops the theme of the opening scene, in which he

⁽²¹⁾ This is missed by R.M. FOWLER, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis 1991) 159, in his description of the irony in 14,65.

⁽²²⁾ STOCK, *Boten*, 7-70.

went inside (ἔσω) the courtyard (14,54), by further distancing himself from Jesus.

The drama of Peter's denial intensifies as the maid sees him withdrawing and charges him before the bystanders with being a disciple of Jesus. Her accusation that this man is one of them (14,69) functions as another ironic understatement, since Peter is not merely one of the disciples, but the first-called (1,16-18), the leader (3,16), and spokesman of the disciples (1,36; 8,29.32; 9,5; 10,28; 11,21), the one who vehemently protested that he would be the exception to all others by dying with Jesus rather than denying him (14,27-31). The additional evidence brought by the whole group of bystanders that he is a Galilean brings to a climax the ironic understatements of the accusations against Peter. That Peter is a Galilean means not merely that he is from the same geographical region as Jesus, but that it was as a Galilean that Peter was first called to be a disciple (1,16) to follow Jesus in his ministry of teaching and healing throughout all of Galilee (1,14-15.28.35-39). That Peter is indeed a Galilean means that he is one of the disciples Jesus has promised to rejoin in Galilee after his resurrection (14,28).

Peter then denies his discipleship for the third time: "I do not know this man of whom you speak" (14,71). His cursing and swearing contrasts with his earnest protest that he would die with Jesus rather than deny him (14,31). Although he confessed Jesus to be the Christ (8,29), Peter really does not know Jesus. He does not understand what "this man" has just confessed to the high priest and the Sanhedrin, namely, that he is the Christ and Son of God precisely because he suffers and dies, but who will come again as exalted Son of Man in final triumph (14,62). Despite his protest Peter has denied Jesus, exactly as Jesus had predicted (14,30). But his response of weeping is an expression of deep remorse indicative of his repentance (14,72). Although he has failed miserably as leader of the disciples, there is still the hope that he will be reconciled with the risen Jesus in Galilee (14,28).

B. Mark 15,1-32: The Innocent Jesus Is Crucified as True King

1. B² 15,1-5: Jesus admits his kingship to Pilate

Jesus' admission of his kingship to Pilate (15,1-5) not only contrasts with Peter's denial of Jesus (14,66-72), but also develops Jesus' admission of his divine Sonship to the high priest (14,55-65).

The contrast with the previous A scene begins with the notice that it was the morning following the night of Peter's denial. Whereas Peter freely went out of the high priest's courtyard (14,68), Jesus is now forcibly bound and led away to the Roman governor (15,1).

That the chief priests with the scribes and elders delivered Jesus to Pilate continues to illustrate Jesus' power to prophesy, which was mocked in the previous B scene (14,65). The Jewish leaders are ironically achieving God's plan as predicted by Jesus:

10,33 The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and *deliver him to the Gentiles*.

15,1 They bound Jesus, led him away, and *delivered him to Pilate*.

Pilate's question to Jesus whether he is the king of the Jews (15,2) develops that of the high priest about whether Jesus is the Messianic Son of God in the previous B scene (14,61). The two questions are nearly equivalent. Pilate's question, however, carries more political connotations of sedition to the Roman government. Since Jesus has been bound as a prisoner, forcibly led away and delivered by the Jewish leaders to the Roman governor, treatment hardly appropriate for a king, Pilate's question must be understood as a mockery.

Jesus' reply to Pilate, "you say so" (Σὺ λέγεις, 15,2) directly contrasts Peter's disclaimer to the maid of the high priest, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying (σὺ τί λέγεις, 14,68)". It also develops his bold affirmation to the high priest in the previous B scene (14,62). Neither clearly affirming nor denying Pilate's question, Jesus' answer, "*you* say so", throws the burden of his designation as king back on his questioner. Jesus does not claim the title of king for himself, but neither does he reject it. In what sense he is king is to be determined by Pilate, the one who "says" it. The audience, who knows that Jesus is indeed the king of the Jews in the sense that he is the Messianic Son of God through suffering, dying, and rising as the Son of Man (14,61-62), experiences the irony that Pilate is unwittingly establishing Jesus' true kingship precisely by mocking it.

Pilate's next question to Jesus again echoes that of the high priest during Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin:

14,60 The high priest stood up before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "*Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?*"

- 15,4 Pilate again questioned him, saying, "*Have you no answer? See how many accusations they bring against you!*"

Since the high priest was referring to the uneven testimony of the many false witnesses that arose against Jesus (14,56-57), the implication is that the accusations of the chief priests against Jesus (15,3) are likewise false, so that Jesus is innocent.

That Jesus made no further answer to Pilate (15,5), declining to defend himself against the false charges of the chief priests, likewise echoes his silence to the high priest regarding the unjust testimony of the false witnesses (14,61). Jesus' reticence contributes to his portrayal as the innocent suffering servant and just one (Isa 53,7), who, though abandoned by friends and surrounded by false accusers, silently perseveres through persecution, relying upon God for his vindication. Pilate wonders in amazement that one whom he questioned as king can remain defenselessly silent before his accusers. But for the audience Jesus' silence further illustrates that he is the king of the Jews precisely and paradoxically as the silently suffering servant and just one of God.

2. A³ 15,6-15: The crowd demands death of Jesus, their true King

The crowd's demand for Jesus, their king, to be crucified (15,6-15) not only contrasts with Jesus' admission of his kingship to Pilate (15,1-5), but also advances the theme of Peter's denial of Jesus (14,66-72). As a rebel who had been bound (δεδεμένος) as a prisoner along with other rebels guilty of murder (15,7), Barabbas differs from Jesus, whom the Jewish leaders bound (δήσαντες) and led away to be put to death by Pilate despite his innocence in the previous B scene (15,1). Against the foil of the chief priests accusing Jesus in order to persuade Pilate to put him to death (15,3), the crowd asks Pilate to release a prisoner (15,8) in accord with his custom for the feast (15,6). Suspense is aroused with the possibility that the crowd, previously impressed by Jesus (1,22; 11,9-10.18; 12,12.37), might accept Pilate's offer to release him (15,9) and thus thwart the plot of the chief priests to have the Roman governor put him to death.

But Pilate's offer to release Jesus to the crowd as the king of the Jews (15,9) also advances the theme of the previous A scene of Peter's denial of Jesus. Just as the high priest's maid and the

bystanders gave Peter, who had followed Jesus throughout his ministry, the chance to affirm his discipleship in the face of the unjust condemnation of his master to death (14,67.69.70), so Pilate gives the crowd, who have been favorably attracted to Jesus, the opportunity to accept him as their true king, unjustly delivered to death by the Jewish leaders envious of his authoritative leadership (15,10).

Whereas the chief priests had tried to persuade Pilate to execute Jesus in the previous B scene, they now stir up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas (15,11), the murderous rebel, instead of Jesus, their innocent and true king. The chief priests' preference for one guilty of murder in rebellion underscores how they are rebelling against their true king and murdering him. By stirring up the crowd, the chief priests are ironically causing the rebellious "tumult" of the people they had hoped to prevent (14,1-2). But they cannot avoid involving the people in their plot of rejecting and killing their true king.

Just as Peter denied his discipleship of the condemned but innocent Jesus in the previous A scene (14,68.70.71), so now the crowd, misdirected by their chief priests, rejects the innocent Jesus (15,12-13). They want Pilate to crucify as a seditious criminal the one whom they refuse to accept as their true and innocent king. Pilate's protest, "Why, what evil has he done?" (15,14), emphasizes the innocence of Jesus as the suffering just one of God. The crowd, although unable to charge Jesus with anything evil, overwhelms Pilate's protest with their insistent demand to "crucify him!" But precisely by demanding the crucifixion of God's suffering just one, they are paradoxically establishing Jesus as their rejected but true king.

In contrast to his wonderment about Jesus' defenseless silence before the chief priests' accusations against him in the previous B scene (15,5), Pilate, although he knows Jesus is innocent (15,10.14), releases the guilty Barabbas instead of Jesus to satisfy the crowd (15,15). But by scourging and delivering Jesus to be crucified, Pilate not only furthers the plot of the chief priests, who out of envy delivered Jesus to Pilate for death (15,1.10), but also advances God's plan predicted by Jesus (10,33-34). The chief priests, the crowd, and Pilate all play their roles in establishing Jesus as the true king precisely by perpetrating his death as the suffering just one to be vindicated by God.

3. B³ 15,16-32: Jesus' kingship is mocked by Gentiles and Jews

The mockery by Gentiles and Jews of the kingship of the innocently dying Jesus (15,16-32) not only contrasts with the crowd's demand for Jesus, their king, to be crucified (15,6-15), but also develops Jesus' admission of his kingship to Pilate (15,1-5). Just as those who arrested Jesus had led him away (ἀπήγαγον) to the palace (αὐλήν), the residence of the high priest, for his trial before the whole Sanhedrin (14,53-55), so the Roman soldiers led him away (ἀπήγαγον) to the palace (αὐλῆς) or praetorium, the official residence of the Roman ruler, and assembled the whole cohort of soldiers (15,16). This gathering of the whole (ὅλην) cohort of gentile soldiers around Jesus thus complements that of the whole (ὅλον) Jewish Sanhedrin in the previous B scenes (14,55; 15,1).

Against the foil of the Jewish crowd's rejection of Jesus as their king in the previous A scene, the gentile soldiers perform a cruel parody of an official royal investiture of Jesus, ironically establishing his true kingship. They dress him in purple, clothing appropriate for a king, but as a mockery of a royal coronation they add a "crown of thorns" (15,17). Mimicking the regal acclamation accorded a Roman emperor or king, the soldiers salute Jesus with a ridiculing "Hail, King of the Jews!" (15,18) in contrast to the Jewish crowd's vociferous "Crucify him!" (15,13-14). The irony is that these gentile soldiers, precisely by mocking Jesus as the king rejected by his own Jewish people, are unwittingly clothing, crowning, and hailing him as the true king of the Jews.

By striking his head with a reed in mockery of his royal powerlessness and by spitting upon him in contempt (15,19), the gentile soldiers advance not only the plot of the Jewish leaders to put Jesus to death in the previous B scenes but also the plan of God as predicted by Jesus, namely, that the Jewish leaders would deliver him to the Gentiles, who would mock him and spit upon him and scourge him (10,33-34). Their ridicule of the reverence due him as king by kneeling before him in homage ironically foreshadows the genuine reverence to be accorded Jesus as the paradoxical king, enduring abuse as the suffering just one of God rather than displaying royal power.

By stripping him of the purple cloak and dressing him again in his own clothing (15,20), the gentile soldiers ironically contribute to the paradoxical character of Jesus' kingship. The purple robe of royalty is quite inappropriate for Jesus who shows himself to be a

king unlike the gentile rulers and great ones who lord and wield authority over their subjects (10,42). That Jesus wears his own clothes rather than regal purple accords with the greatness he demonstrates as the servant king and slave of all, who came not "to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10,43-45). As they led him out to crucify him (15,20), the gentile soldiers play their ironic role, in accord with the wish of the Jewish people that he be crucified (15,13-14), to establish Jesus as the true king of the Jews precisely and paradoxically in and through his rejection, ridicule, suffering, and death.

Against the foil of the crowd's rejection in the previous A scene of the Jesus they had so gladly followed, the soldiers must compel a mere passer-by to carry Jesus' cross (15,21). In contrast to the Simon called to be the leader of the disciples and named Peter by Jesus in *Galilee* (3,16; 14,70), but who is now absent because of his denial of Jesus in the first A scene, Simon of *Cyrene* is forced to carry Jesus' cross. The soldiers unwittingly make this Simon, in the absence of all former followers, a substitute model of discipleship. Although forced, this Simon literally illustrates what Jesus demands of a disciple by taking up the cross of Jesus himself: "If anyone wishes to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me" (8,34).

As Jesus is crucified as the suffering just one of God, abandoned by all followers and bereft even of his own clothing (15,22-25), the inscribed charge against him, "The King of the Jews" (15,26), reinforces his paradoxical kingship in contrast to the crowd's rejection of him as their king in the previous A scene. Against the foil of the release of the guilty Barabbas, the innocent Jesus, who was unjustly arrested as if a robber (14,48), is incongruously crucified in a mock enthronement between two robbers (15,27). These two robbers, presented as Jesus' royal attendants, one on his right and one on his left, serve as substitute disciples for James and John who had requested to "sit one at your right and the other at your left" in the glory of Jesus after promising to "drink the cup" of and to be "baptized" with the suffering and death of Jesus (10,37-39), but who are now absent. Disciples rather than robbers should be dying with Jesus in order to participate in his glory. By crucifying Jesus as a mock king between two robbers, the soldiers are ironically enthroning him as the true king of the Jews, since Jesus had earlier indicated that the Jewish leaders are the real robbers (11,17).

Continuing the accusations against Jesus in the previous B scenes, the passers-by taunt him to fulfill the boast attributed to him at his trial before the high priest in the first B scene (14,58), namely, that he would destroy the temple sanctuary and rebuild it in three days (15,29). In challenging him to save himself by coming down from the cross (15,30), his taunters voice the paradoxical irony that it is precisely by remaining on the cross and losing his life that Jesus will save it. This accords with Jesus' pronouncement that "whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it" (8,35). By remaining on the cross and enduring the powerlessness of crucifixion, Jesus as the suffering just one will be raised from the dead by God in three days (8,31; 9,31; 10,34) and thus demonstrate his divine power to indeed destroy the old sanctuary made by hands and erect a new one not made by hands.

Intensifying the ridicule of the passers-by, the chief priests with the scribes advance the opposition they have brought against Jesus in the previous B scenes. Their jeering of the crucified Jesus among themselves expresses the paradoxical irony that although Jesus saved others, he cannot save himself (15,31). Indeed, although Jesus has saved others throughout the narrative by teaching, healing and exorcising, he cannot save himself from death because only God can and will save him by raising him after he has died. As Jesus has taught and now exemplifies, all things are possible for one who has faith in the God of unlimited power (9,23; 10,27; 11,22-24)⁽²³⁾. But that God will save him as he remains on the cross to give his life as a ransom for many (10,45; 14,24) means that he will save not only himself but "many" (= all)⁽²⁴⁾ others in a more profound and definitive sense.

Bringing to a head Jesus' claims to be the Christ (14,61) and the King of the Jews (15,2) in the previous B scenes, the Jewish leaders dare Jesus to prove these claims by coming down from the cross (15,32). By addressing Jesus as the King not just of the Jews, a socio-political community, but of Israel, the chosen people of God, they bring this sandwich's (15,1-32) theme of Jesus' kingship to its

⁽²³⁾ S.E. DOWD, *Prayer, Power, and the Problem of Suffering: Mark 11:22-25 in the Context of Markan Theology* (SBLDS 105; Atlanta 1988).

⁽²⁴⁾ "Many", a common Semitic expression for "all", has a universal connotation; J. JEREMIAS, "πολλοί", *TDNT* VI, 536-545.

climax. They taunt Jesus to come down now from the cross so that they can see and believe, rather than wait to see him in the future as the Son of Man in triumphant vindication and glory (14,62). Their wish to see him come down from the cross so that they may believe serves as an ironic reversal for the audience, who knows that true "seeing" follows from rather than precedes believing. The blind Bartimaeus first believed in the healing power of Jesus and was enabled to see and follow him up to Jerusalem on his way to suffering and death (10,46-52). Only if the Jewish leaders (and Marcan audience) first believe in Jesus, will they be able to see that he is indeed the Christ and King of Israel with power to save himself and all others precisely because he remained on the cross and died in utter powerlessness.

C. Mark 15,33–16,8: Women Witness Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

1. A⁴ 15,33-41: A centurion confesses Jesus' Sonship as women watch

The centurion's confession of Jesus' divine Sonship as women watch (15,33-41) forms a double relationship with each of the two preceding scenes: It not only contrasts with but also develops the mockery by Gentiles and Jews of the kingship of the dying Jesus (15,16-32), and it not only develops but also contrasts with the crowd's demand for Jesus, their king, to be crucified (15,6-15). In contradiction to the taunts of passers-by, Jewish leaders, and robbers crucified with him in the previous B scene, the crucified Jesus along with the whole earth is enveloped for three hours in an ominous darkness (15,33). Having endured God's "abandonment", symbolized by the darkness God has caused⁽²⁵⁾, Jesus, quoting in Aramaic the first words of Psalm 22, begs for the reason "why" or "for what purpose" (εἰς τί) God has forsaken him (15,34). Although indicative of his anguish as he dies alone and without divine intervention, Jesus' loud scream is not a cry of despair but the lamentful prayer of the suffering just one, uttered with total trust in his God. Instead of coming down from the cross and saving himself

⁽²⁵⁾ According to Amos 8,9 God himself promised to cause such a darkness on the end-time "day of the Lord": "'On that day', says the Lord God, 'I will make the sun go down at noon, and cover the earth with darkness in broad daylight'".

as his taunters propose (15,29-32), Jesus, with confidence in God's sovereign plan, addresses him twice as "my God", calling for God to disclose the purpose "why" he has abandoned him to death.

Continuing the mockery of the previous B scene, some of the bystanders, confusing the Aramaic address "my God" (Ελωι) with the name Elijah, distort Jesus' prayer of trust in God into a plea for Elijah to rescue him (15,35). In order to prolong Jesus' life, one of the bystanders offers him a drink of vinegar (15,36), ironically contributing to the portrait of Jesus as the suffering just one whose foes gave him vinegar to drink (Ps 69,22). This bystander's exclamation, "Let us see (ἴδωμεν) if Elijah comes to take him down!", advances the taunt of the Jewish leaders, who want Jesus to come down from the cross to "see (ἴδωμεν) and believe" that he is the Christ, the King of Israel (15,32). Although Jesus cannot save himself (15,31) by coming down from the cross, perhaps they will "see" and believe if God saves him by sending Elijah. The irony is that not even Elijah can rescue Jesus, because as Jesus himself stated, "already Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him" (9,13). In the person of John the Baptist (1,6; 6,14-29) Elijah has already come and suffered the same fate Jesus is now suffering in accord with God's will.

Completing his loud cry of trust in God, Jesus finally expires on the cross (15,37). In response to Jesus' death and as a beginning to the answer of why God has abandoned him, the veil hanging in the temple sanctuary was torn by God (divine passive) in two pieces from top to bottom (15,38), in other words, totally destroyed from heaven downwards. This complete destruction of the sanctuary veil, symbolic of the entire temple cult, indicates the termination of the old sanctuary made by hands and thus inadequate as the place of God's presence and authentic worship, and points to the advent of the new, superior sanctuary not made by hands. The tearing of the sanctuary veil, indicative of the entire temple's demise (13,1-2), begins to fulfill the first part of the prophecy attributed to Jesus by the false witnesses in the first B scene (14,58) and later used to mock his powerlessness on the cross in the preceding B scene (15,29). By his death on the cross in apparent weakness Jesus effects the destruction of the sanctuary made by hands and opens the way for the one not made by hands.

When the Roman centurion overseeing Jesus' crucifixion stood facing him and "saw" how he expired with a loud cry of lamentful

but total trust in God (15,34.37), he proclaimed, "Truly this man was Son of God!" (15,39)⁽²⁶⁾. In contrast not only to the bystanders who wanted to prolong his crucifixion to "see" if Elijah would come and take him down from the cross (15,36), but also to the Jewish leaders in the previous B scene, who taunted Jesus to come down from the cross so that they might "see" and believe that he is the Christ, the King of Israel (15,32), the centurion is able to believe that Jesus was not only the Christ, the King of Israel but Son of God when he "sees" how he dies on the cross with complete confidence in God.

The centurion's confession also contrasts with the theme of the A scenes, the abandonment of Jesus by those who had followed him. Whereas the Jewish crowd who had been favorably attracted to Jesus called for his crucifixion (15,6-15), and whereas Peter, the leader and spokesman of the Twelve, denied with cursing and swearing that he even knew "this man" Jesus (14,71), the Roman centurion functions as another substitute disciple. He comes to the knowledge of the profound identity of "this man" Jesus as the human being who was truly Son of God, when he witnesses how he dies on the cross.

The centurion's confession that Jesus was "truly" Son of God not only confirms the truth of Jesus' own admission to the high priest that he is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One (14,61-62), but reinforces and brings to a climax all of this Gospel's previous acclamations of Jesus' profound identity as the Christ and Son of God (1,1.11; 3,11; 5,7; 8,29; 9,7). That the climactic confession of the entire Gospel is proclaimed by a Roman centurion, a non-Jew and a non-disciple, is shocking. The centurion is able to complement Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ (8,29) and become the first human being to acknowledge that Jesus was truly Son of God only because he witnessed how Jesus revealed himself to be Son of God by dying on the cross with a loud cry of total trust in God.

The presence of the women who had followed Jesus in Galilee (15,40-41) advances the theme of the A scenes, the positions taken toward Jesus by his followers. Although a disciple, Peter denied Jesus (14,53-54.66-72); although they had been favorably attracted to Jesus, the crowd rejected him (15,6-15); now women followers,

⁽²⁶⁾ K. STOCK, "Das Bekenntnis des Centurio. Mk 15,39 im Rahmen des Markusevangeliums", *ZKT* 100 (1978) 289-301.

like Peter who had followed Jesus from afar (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, 14,54), look on from afar (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, 15,40), arousing the suspense of how they will respond to the death of Jesus. Rather than Peter, James, and John, the distinctive group of three male disciples who had accompanied Jesus at critical moments and witnessed his special revelations throughout his ministry (1,16-20.29; 3,16-17; 5,37; 9,2; 13,3), three specifically named women — Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome — are present. As witnesses of the revelatory death of Jesus, these three women now substitute for Peter, James, and John, who have deserted Jesus along with the rest of the male disciples.

The three women, along with the many other women who came up with Jesus to Jerusalem, represent ideal disciples. Having followed Jesus when he was in Galilee, served him as true disciples (10,43-45), and accompanied him to Jerusalem (10,32-34), these women have followed the entire “way” of Jesus, remaining with him and witnessing his ministry in Galilee as well as his suffering and death in Jerusalem. Their presence at the crucifixion of Jesus as Jewish female disciples complements that of the gentile male centurion, who recognizes that the man Jesus is truly the Son of God with power to save all others because he died on the cross as the suffering just one in full obedience to God.

2. B⁴ 15,42-47: Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus as women watch

Continuing the more complex interrelation of these final scenes, the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea as women watch (15,42-47) not only contrasts with but also develops the centurion's confession of Jesus' divine Sonship as women watch (15,33-41). In addition, it not only develops but also contrasts with the mockery by Gentiles and Jews of the kingship of the dying Jesus (15,16-32). In contrast to the passivity of the Galilean women, who look on from afar as Jesus dies in the previous A scene, Joseph of Arimathea, acting with haste to bury Jesus while it is still the “preparation” day before the sabbath (15,42), comes forward and asks Pilate for the body of Jesus (15,43). His courageous request to bury the body of Jesus contrasts with not only the crowd's demand of Pilate to crucify Jesus (15,6-15) but also with Peter's cowardly denial of Jesus (14,66-72) in the A scenes. In the absence of disciples “from Galilee”, those who should bury the body of their master

(see 6,29), Joseph "from Arimathea" functions as another substitute disciple. This Arimathean's courage in asking for the body (σῶμα) of Jesus contrasts with the cowardice of the Galilean disciples who have betrayed, deserted, and denied their master, despite having been given his body (σῶμα) in the form of the bread at the Passover meal anticipating his death (14,22-25).

Against the foil of the Jewish leaders' mockery of Jesus' kingship (15,32) in the previous B scene, Joseph, a distinguished member of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin which had condemned Jesus to death in the preceding B scenes (14,55.64; 15,1), requests the body of Jesus in risk of losing his distinguished status by giving proper burial to the criminal whom his own council has condemned to an ignominious death. That Joseph was himself awaiting the kingdom of God (15,43) makes him a sympathizer of the kingship of Jesus, whose teaching and preaching demonstrated (1,15; 4,11.26.30; 9,1.47; 10,14-15.23-25; 12,34) and whose death anticipates (14,25) the definitive arrival of God's kingdom. By requesting the body of Jesus for burial, Joseph plays his role as a substitute disciple by indicating the importance of Jesus' burial for bringing about the kingdom of God and confirming, against the mockery of his own Sanhedrin, that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the King of Israel.

Pilate's wonderment about the death of Jesus (15,44) brings to a climax the theme of the B scenes, the plot of the Jewish leaders to put Jesus to death. In the first B scene (14,55-65) the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death (14,55) and condemned him as deserving of death (14,64). They then delivered him to Pilate to be put to death in the second B scene (15,1-5) and joined in the gentile soldiers' mockery of the dying Jesus as their King in the third B scene (15,16-32). Now Pilate establishes the accomplishment of the plot for Jesus' death by calling the centurion who oversaw Jesus' crucifixion to verify the actual death of Jesus.

Advancing his response toward Jesus in the previous A scene, the centurion continues to function as a substitute disciple as he in the absence of the disciples gives the definitive witness that Jesus has really died (15,45). The emphasis upon the reality of Jesus' death prepares for his expected resurrection after three days as the triumphant vindication over actual death (8,31; 9,31; 10,34), rather than a mere revival of one who nearly died.

In contradiction to the bystander who wanted to see if Elijah would take down (καθελεῖν) Jesus from the cross in the previous A scene (15,36), Joseph took him down (καθελών, 15,46), which underlines Jesus' obedience of the divine necessity that he undergo death as the suffering just one of God. After purchasing a linen cloth as an appropriate burial garment for the naked corpse (15,24), Joseph gives Jesus a proper burial as he wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a genuine tomb, one that had been hewn out of rock. He completed the burial of Jesus by rolling a stone against the entrance of the tomb (15,46). His use of a linen cloth (σινδόνα) to bury Jesus continues to illustrate how Joseph is a substitute disciple. He recalls the absence of the disciples who deserted Jesus and of the young follower who even left behind his linen cloth (σινδόνα) when he abandoned Jesus in fearful flight (14,51-52). Like the disciples of John the Baptist, who took the dead body (πτῶμα) of their master and laid it in a tomb (ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν μνημείῳ, 6,29) Joseph acts as a true disciple when he took the dead body (πτῶμα, 15,45) of Jesus and laid him in a tomb (ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ, 15,46).

Further complementing the centurion's confession and witness to the death of Jesus as Son of God and Joseph's role in properly burying him, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus continue the full witness of women disciples to both the ministry and death of Jesus in the previous A scene (15,40-41) as they watched where Jesus was buried (15,47). Having participated in the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, having remained with him during his crucifixion in Jerusalem, and having now witnessed the burial which underlines the reality of his death, these women followers are uniquely qualified to witness the predicted resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

3. A⁵ 16,1-8: Women receive revelation of Jesus' resurrection

The women's reception of the divine revelation of Jesus' resurrection (16,1-8) both contrasts with and develops the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea as women watch (15,42-47). It likewise both develops and contrasts with the centurion's confession of Jesus' divine Sonship as women watch (15,33-41). As a contrastive development to their passivity at both the death of Jesus in the previous A scene (15,40-41) and at his burial in the previous B scene (15,47), the women bought spices and came to the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus (16,1-2).

That the women come to Jesus' tomb very early on the first day of the week (16,2), the third day after his death, the time of his predicted resurrection, signals a new situation in advance of the evening of the preparation day before the sabbath in the previous B scene of the burial (15,42). The notice that they come when the sun had "risen" not only indicates a new situation in advance of the three hours of total darkness preceding the death of Jesus in the previous A scene (15,33) but symbolically hints that Jesus, too, has already "risen" (16,2).

The women's intention to anoint Jesus with spices they have bought (ἡγόρασαν, 16,1) not only continues their service to him as disciples who have followed him from Galilee (15,41), but also complements Joseph's concern to give Jesus a proper burial with the linen cloth he bought (ἄγοράσας, 15,46) to wrap Jesus' body. Their desire to anoint the dead and buried body of Jesus advances the theme of the B scenes, the establishment of Jesus' death. But their wish to anoint arouses dramatic tension for the audience, since Jesus' body has already been anointed for burial by the woman at Bethany (14,3-9). These women, then, seemingly unaware that Jesus has already been anointed, are not expecting the fulfillment of his predictions that he would rise from the dead "after three days".

Having witnessed that Joseph had rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb (15,46) after burying Jesus, the women generate added suspense as they acknowledge to one another their inability to remove this very large stone (16,3-4). The suspense of their watching (θεωροῦσαι) the death of Jesus (15,40) and their watching (ἐθεώρουν) where he was buried (15,47) reaches its apex as they look up and see (θεωροῦσιν) that the large stone already had been rolled back (16,4).

When the women enter the tomb, an "epiphany" or more exactly an "angelophany" commences⁽²⁷⁾. They suddenly and un-

⁽²⁷⁾ The literary genre of "epiphany" is defined as "a disposition of literary motifs narrating a sudden and unexpected manifestation of a divine or heavenly being experienced by certain selected persons, in which the divine being reveals a divine attribute, action, or message. The essential characteristic of an epiphany is that it reveals some aspect of God's salvific dealings with his people. An epiphany thus presents or offers a particular revelation to certain people, who are then free to accept or reject it"; see J. P. HEIL, *Jesus Walking on the Sea: Meaning and Gospel Functions of Matt 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15b-21* (AnBib 87; Rome 1981) 8.

expectedly see a mysterious young man, who functions as the appearing angel of this angelophany⁽²⁸⁾. He is sitting on the right side, that is, in a position of divine authority (12,36; 14,62), ready to deliver a divine revelation to the women. That he is clothed in a white robe confirms his status as an appropriately garbed heavenly figure (9,3) sent by God. In accord with the conventions of the epiphany genre the women's initial reaction to the startling appearance of the young man as a heavenly figure is utter amazement (16,5)⁽²⁹⁾.

After reassuring the women, the angelic young man begins his revelatory message by acknowledging that they have come to the tomb seeking Jesus of Nazareth as the crucified one (16,6). But the young man transforms their expectation of finding Jesus in the tomb with his divine revelation that the crucified one has been raised! By confirming the fulfillment of Jesus' predictions that three days after his suffering and death he would be raised (8,31; 9,31; 10,34), the young man dramatically contradicts the theme of the B scenes, the establishment of Jesus' death. Whereas Pilate had verified the death of Jesus in the previous B scene (15,45), the young man now reveals that Jesus has been raised from death in vindicating triumph over the plot of the Jewish leaders to eliminate him. Furthermore, the young man asserts that "he is not here" in the tomb, the realm of the dead, the place where, as the women had witnessed (15,47), they buried him.

The angelic young man advances the theme of the A scenes, the distancing from Jesus by those who had followed him, as he commissions the women to re-unite the deserting disciples with Jesus. He commands them to go and tell his disciples, all of whom had abandoned him like scattered sheep (14,27) when he was arrested (14,50-52), and Peter, who had three times denied his close relationship with Jesus in the opening A scenes (14,53-54.66-72), the message that "he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you" (16,7). The young man confirms the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of leading the disciples back to union with him in Galilee after his resurrection (14,28). Whereas Jesus was earlier going before (προάγων) his followers, leading them as they were amazed and afraid, on the "way" up to Jerusalem as the place of his suffering and death (10,32), he is now going before (προάγει) his

⁽²⁸⁾ See Acts 1,10; 10,30; 2 Macc 3,26.33.

⁽²⁹⁾ HEIL, *Jesus Walking on the Sea*, 11.

disciples to Galilee, leading them back to the place of their close union with him before they deserted him⁽³⁰⁾.

That in Galilee the disciples will see the risen Jesus who had been crucified means that they will then be enabled fully to understand and believe in him. This is confirmed by the fact that when the centurion saw how Jesus died he was able to confess his faith in Jesus and understand how he was truly Son of God by dying on the cross (15,39). This understanding and believing by the centurion after he saw how Jesus died on the cross contrasted with the provocation of the bystanders (15,35-36) and Jewish leaders, who wanted to see him come down from the cross in order to believe (15,31-32). When the disciples see in Galilee that Jesus, who remained on the cross, has now been raised from the dead, they will be able to understand and believe that he is not only the Christ, the King of Israel (15,32) but truly Son of God. That they will see the risen Jesus in Galilee anticipates and assures the eventual seeing by disciples and the whole world of Jesus' final return as the triumphant Son of Man (13,26; 14,62).

When the disciples follow Jesus back to Galilee, they will be able to renew their discipleship by denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Jesus, so that they may save their lives by losing them for the sake of Jesus and the gospel (8,34-38). In and from Galilee they can continue their task of preaching the gospel and healing all peoples throughout the world (13,10; 14,9). The "beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (1,1) and the salvific "way of the Lord" actualized by the "way" of Jesus (1,2-3) is to be continued, extended, and prolonged by the disciples who follow the dynamic "way" of the risen Jesus now going before and leading them back to and beyond Galilee (16,7)⁽³¹⁾.

The response of the women to the young man's message brings the theme of the A scenes, the positions taken toward Jesus by those who had followed him, to its climax. In striking contrast to the centurion's confession of Jesus' divine Sonship when he witnessed how he died in the previous A scene (15,39), the women, who had witnessed Jesus' death (15,40-41), burial (15,47), and the revelation of his resurrection (16,5-6), now run away from the tomb so

⁽³⁰⁾ Jesus' leading of the disciples here contrasts with his earlier being led by others (14,53; 15,1.16.20.22).

⁽³¹⁾ E. MANICARDI, *Il cammino di Gesù nel Vangelo di Marco: Schema narrativo e tema cristologico* (AnBib 96; Rome 1981).

overcome with trembling and astonishment that they said nothing to anyone because of their fear (16,8). Like the disciples who fled (ἐφύγον) from the arrested Jesus (14,50.52) the women fled (ἐφύγον) from the tomb. Peter, who had followed Jesus, denied him in the first two A scenes (14,53-54.66-72); the crowd, who had followed Jesus, rejected him in the third A scene (15,6-15); and now the women, who had followed him and watched his death from afar in the fourth A scene (15,33-41), run away in this final A scene. Their silence ironically contrasts with the failures of Jesus to silence the exciting message of his authoritative teaching and healing power as well as his profound identity (1,25.34.44-45; 3,11-12; 7,36).

The open-ended conclusion of the narrative⁽³²⁾ places the listeners, who identify with both the disciples and the women and who have thus been given the message of the young man, in a position of deciding whether or not to follow the risen Jesus who goes before and leads them back to and beyond the beginning of the gospel in Galilee. By pointing back to the beginning in Galilee, the end of the narrative invites the audience to prolong, with the risen Jesus always and ever going before and leading the “way”, the disciples’ task of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God (1,1) not just to Galilee but beyond it to all peoples of the world (11,17; 13,10; 14,9). Returning to Galilee where Jesus’ gospel of God’s kingdom could not be kept silent calls for the listeners to make known the marvelous message of the triumphant resurrection of Jesus which the fearful women are too astonished to utter.

Conclusion

We have attempted to demonstrate the intricate narrative structure of Mark 14,53–16,8, according to which the Marcan implied audience experiences a dynamic succession of alternating scenes, “an architecture in motion”⁽³³⁾. They progress as a network of intercalations involving the theme of the Jewish leaders bringing about the death of the innocent Jesus intermeshed with the theme of positions taken toward the death of Jesus by those who had followed him. In the audience’s experience of these alternating

⁽³²⁾ J. L. MAGNESS, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark’s Gospel* (Atlanta 1986); R. VIGNOLO, “Una finale reticente: interpretazione narrativa di Mc 16,8”, *RivB* 38 (1990) 129-189.

⁽³³⁾ ALTER, *Pleasures of Reading*, 153.

units the theme of faith in Jesus despite failures to follow him as developed in the A scenes offsets and predominates over the theme of the rejection of Jesus' true identity by Jewish and gentile authorities as developed in the B scenes. The succession of A scenes in contrast to B scenes repeatedly and progressively challenges the listeners to remain faithful followers of the "way" of Jesus by recognizing the paradoxical revelation of his more profound character in and through his rejection by those in authority.

While Peter is cowardly denying his discipleship of Jesus (14,53-54.66-72), Jesus' courageous confession of his Messianic divine Sonship challenges the listener to deny himself and follow Jesus on his way to an unjust death in order to experience his ultimate triumph as Son of Man (14,55-65). Although the crowd who had been favorably attracted by the authoritative leadership of Jesus rejects his kingship by demanding his crucifixion (15,6-15), the mockery of Jesus' kingship by Jewish and gentile authorities invites the listener to probe the paradox that by crucifying the innocent Jesus in accord with God's plan they are enthroning him as true King (15,1-5.16-32). Despite the fact that Jewish leaders have put Jesus to death and buried him (15,42-47), the gentile centurion's confession of faith that the dying Jesus is Son of God (15,33-41) and the young man's revelation that the crucified Jesus has been raised (16,1-8) empowers the audience to complete the Jewish women's witness of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection by following with faith the "way" of the risen Jesus back to and beyond the beginning of the gospel's proclamation in Galilee.

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SOMMAIRE

Les neuf scènes de Marc 14,53–16,8 sont disposées selon un ordre alternatif, chacune formant contraste avec celle qui précède et celle qui suit. De la sorte, il est possible de distinguer sept groupes de trois scènes «en sandwich». Le lecteur implicite constate que le thème de la foi en Jésus, malgré les échecs de ceux qui le suivent, l'emporte sur le thème du rejet de sa vraie identité par les autorités juives et païennes. La séquence narrative met le lecteur au défi de rester fidèle à la «voie» de Jésus et, en même temps, elle l'en rend capable, parce que le rejet de la part des autorités de l'époque lui révèle, de façon paradoxale, la profondeur du mystère du Christ.

Comment Paul voit la justice de Dieu en Rm. Enjeux d'une absence de définition

En Rm 1,16-17, tous les commentateurs voient énoncé le thème principal, et les spécialistes de rhétorique ancienne la *propositio* de l'épître⁽¹⁾. Mais il ne suffit pas de nommer les énoncés comme ils doivent l'être pour en aplanir les difficultés. Si en Rm 1,17 Paul affirme que la δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ s'est manifestée en/par l'Évangile ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, avec une insistance évidente sur ce syntagme prépositionnel brachylogique spécifiant les ou plutôt la modalité de cette justice, il ne semble aucunement préoccupé de nous dire ce qu'il faut entendre par justice: pourquoi chercher selon quelles modalités Paul voit la justice de Dieu se manifester pleinement et définitivement avec l'Évangile, si l'on ne cherche à savoir au préalable ce qu'il entend par justice⁽²⁾? Mais le saurons-nous jamais, puisqu'en ses épîtres l'Apôtre ne prend pas la peine, à la manière d'un Aristote, de définir même succinctement la plupart des concepts qu'il utilise, en particulier celui de justice?

La seconde difficulté tient au rapport établi entre la justice de Dieu et l'Évangile: si la Bonne Nouvelle est celle de la miséricorde à tous, sans exception, comment peut-elle être exprimée en termes de

(1) Cf. W. WUELLNER, «Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans. An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans», *CBQ* 38 (1976) 330-351, que l'on peut considérer à juste titre comme l'étude qui a attiré l'attention sur l'importance de l'approche rhétorique pour Rm; F. SIEGERT, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Röm 9-11* (WUNT 34; Tübingen 1985) 113-114 (1,16-17 énoncés de façon classique comme "Themengabe"); R. JEWETT, «Following the Argument of Romans», *Word and World* 6 (1986) 382-389, article repris et élargi en K.P. DONFRIED (éd.), *The Romans Debate* (Edinburgh 21991) 265-277 (sur la *propositio*, voir les p. 268, 270 et 272); J.-N. ALETTI, «La présence d'un modèle rhétorique en Romains. Son rôle et son importance», *Bib* 71 (1990) 1-24; id., *Comment Dieu est-il juste? Clefs pour interpréter l'épître aux Romains* (Paris 1991) 32-40.

(2) C'est une objection qu'on pourrait faire à mon étude *Comment Dieu est-il juste?* citée dans la note précédente. Je vais montrer dans la suite de cet article ce qu'il faut penser d'une telle objection.

justice — mais ici encore que met-on sous ce dernier terme pour le voir opposé à ceux de miséricorde et de grâce? Bref, pourquoi en Rm l'Apôtre met-il l'Évangile principalement en rapport avec la justice divine⁽³⁾ et pas d'abord avec la promesse ou la miséricorde, qui auraient pu être des thèmes autrement plus porteurs? Un fait ne manque d'ailleurs pas d'étonner: en presque toutes les sections argumentatives de Rm où la justice divine est sur le devant de la scène, très peu de place est donnée à Jésus Christ, dont Paul fait pourtant l'objet premier de l'Évangile, juste après l'adresse initiale, en Rm 1,3-4. Le rapport entre Évangile et justice divine est-il donc en notre épître aussi étroit que la *propositio* principale (1,16-17) le donnerait à penser⁽⁴⁾?

La réponse à ces questionnements se déroulera en plusieurs temps. Elle montrera d'abord que si l'Apôtre ne définit pas en quelques énoncés concis — à la manière des philosophes grecs — ce qu'il entend par justice (humaine et/ou divine), au début, au cours ou à la fin de son argumentation, ce n'est aucunement par oubli ou distraction: son silence a des raisons principalement rhétoriques. Il restera alors à prouver que pour lui ce sont les modalités (le comment) et elles seules qui manifestent et, par là, «définissent» la justice divine.

(3) L'expression «justice divine» ne rend pas exactement le syntagme grec; en Rm, le substantif δικαιοσύνη est en effet suivi du génitif (τοῦ) θεοῦ, dont D. A. CAMPBELL, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans* 3.21-26 (Sheffield 1992), vient de montrer l'intérêt, soulignant la manière dont Paul joue sur ce génitif et exploite ses virtualités. Son étude vient nous rappeler les subtilités de l'écriture paulinienne; elle n'infirme pourtant pas la question posée présentement: s'il est aussi habile à jouer avec le génitif, pourquoi l'Apôtre ne fournit-il pas à son lecteur une définition de la «justice de Dieu»? Au cours de ces pages, l'adjectif «divin(e)» sera souvent préféré au génitif «de Dieu», à seule fin d'éviter les pesanteurs syntaxiques.

(4) Que la justice divine soit un thème majeur en plusieurs sections de Rm, une consultation, même rapide des concordances aux vocables δίκαιος, δικαίω, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα l'indique déjà. Mais plus que le simple relevé du vocabulaire relatif à la justice (qu'on aurait d'ailleurs tort de restreindre aux mots de racine δικ-), c'est l'articulation rhétorique qui montre le rôle porteur du thème: (a) la *propositio* principale (1,16-17) et deux *subpropositiones* (1,18; 3,21-22) inaugurant des sections argumentatives assez longues, (b) des passages de tonalité diatribique, introduisant (par ex. 9,30-33) ou constituant le nœud de sous-sections (3,1-8; 9,14-23). Sur ce point, voir ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?*, surtout 54-80 et 157-178. La question n'est pas tellement celle de l'importance donnée à la justice divine en Rm que de son rapport à l'Évangile de la grâce.

I. Une écriture de type et d'inspiration biblique

Comme l'ont noté les commentateurs, Rm est la première des lettres pauliniennes où le thème de la justice de Dieu est autant sollicité⁽⁵⁾. Ce n'est certes pas le seul thème qui court tout au long de l'épître⁽⁶⁾, mais son importance n'est pas un effet de perspective dû au long contentieux existant entre Catholiques et Protestants, bref, un exemple de *Wirkungsgeschichte*. Raison de plus pour chercher ce qui a poussé Paul à ne pas dire tout de ce qu'il entend par «justice de Dieu».

Si, tout en donnant autant d'importance à la justice divine, Paul ne la définit pas, même sommairement, ne serait-ce pas parce qu'à la manière des poètes bibliques, il illustre ses idées à l'aide de champs sémantiques variés plutôt que de les développer abstraitement? Car, lorsque les psalmistes, par exemple, veulent exprimer ce que sont pour eux la miséricorde ou la justice divines, ils agencent les champs où elles s'exercent, les modalités par lesquelles elles se manifestent, les destinataires qu'elles atteignent, sans définitions conceptuelles. Sur ce point précis, on ne saurait nier une réelle ressemblance, laquelle peut signifier une possible parenté d'écriture, entre Paul et les

⁽⁵⁾ Cf. récemment, J. BECKER, *Paulus. Der Apostel der Völker* (Tübingen 1989), selon qui il faut relativiser le vocabulaire de la justice en le situant dans la trajectoire d'ensemble des écrits pauliniens. Également, R. PENNA, «Rm 1,18-2,29 tra predicazione missionaria e prestito ambientale», G. GHIBERTI (éd.) *La Bibbia, libro sacro, e la sua interpretazione* (ABI), in *Ricerche Storico-Bibliche* 2 (1991) 111-117, qui note à propos de Rm 1,18-2,29: «Du point de vue fonctionnel, les pages de notre passage sont mises en contrepoint au thème de la «justice de Dieu», qui est substantiellement nouveau dans l'ensemble des lettres pauliniennes» (112). C'est moi qui souligne.

⁽⁶⁾ Cf. ceux de la δόξα, de la Loi de la foi. H. D. BETZ, «Christianity as Religion: Paul's Attempt at Definition in Romans», *JR* 71 (1991) 315-344, en analysant des versets comme Rm 1,9,25; 9,4; 12,1-2, essaie quant à lui de montrer l'influence sous-jacente d'un débat entre religions: même si l'épître n'a pas pour fin première de définir le christianisme comme (la meilleure) religion, cette problématique n'en constituerait pas moins un fil rouge courant tout au long de l'argumentation. On pourrait évidemment objecter que le terme «christianisme» n'est jamais utilisé par l'Apôtre en Rm et qu'il ne voit pas la foi en Jésus Christ comme une religion supplémentaire, au sens où, pour un juif, elle impliquerait une nécessaire séparation d'avec le judaïsme: juif lui-même, Paul croyait en Jésus Christ sans cesser d'être et de se dire croyant juif; les réflexions de Betz sont néanmoins très suggestives et stimulantes pour l'exégèse de Rm.

écrivains bibliques, dans la manière de traiter les thèmes par touches successives⁽⁷⁾. Il nous faudra d'ailleurs voir si le texte de Rm — au moins en ses onze premiers chapitres —, ne présente pas progressivement les différentes composantes de la justice divine. N'oublions cependant pas les nombreux passages de cette épître où la pensée de l'Apôtre se déploie en une argumentation serrée qui atteint des sommets d'abstraction et présente aussi des traits hellénistiques évidents⁽⁸⁾. S'il n'y propose donc pas une définition en bonne et due forme de la « justice divine », ce n'est pas d'abord parce que son écriture est incapable d'abstraction et de définition⁽⁹⁾; il faut donc éviter de donner à l'adjectif *biblique* une connotation négative.

1. *L'arrière-fond biblique et juif de Rm 1-2*

L'influence biblique est d'ailleurs trop forte dans les quatre premiers chapitres de l'épître pour qu'on ne s'interroge pas sur sa fonction.

Tous les commentateurs ont suffisamment relevé les nombreux points que Rm 1,18-32 a en commun avec les affirmations bibliques et juives de l'époque pour qu'il faille y revenir⁽¹⁰⁾. Très probablement, Paul y reprend des éléments de l'apologétique juive⁽¹¹⁾. Nom-

(7) Comme celui de la filiation en Ga 3-4, ou pour la sagesse en 1 Co 1-3.

(8) Outre les éléments de la *dispositio* des discours anciens (et sur laquelle on trouvera les informations essentielles dans les études citées en note 1), le style diatribique et le cadre épistolaire sont les témoins évidents d'une influence hellénistique. Cf., entre autres, S. K. STOWERS, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Ann Arbor 1981) et A. J. MALHERBE, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis 1989). Reconnaissons, avec ce dernier auteur, qu'en Rm l'influence de l'hellénisme est plus forte au niveau de la forme de l'argumentation que des idées et des thèmes théologiques — excepté en des passages comme Rm 7,15, où il faut voir un *topos* repris tant de fois depuis la *Médée* d'Euripide (cf. les vers 1078-1080) et manifestement connu de Paul. Cf. G. THEISSEN, *Psychologische Aspekte paulinischer Theologie* (Göttingen 1983) 214-223.

(9) Au demeurant, Rm donne au moins deux exemples d'amorces de définitions brèves, négatives en leur forme (en 8,24-25 par une série d'enthymèmes; 9,6b par désignation).

(10) Outre les différents commentaires, voir encore T. LAATO, *Paulus und das Judentum. Anthropologische Erwägungen* (Åbo 1991), qui fournit une table des parallèles lexicaux existant entre Rm 1,18-2,5 et Sg 11-13.

(11) Les exégètes des dernières décennies ont trop facilement vu en Rm 1,19-32 une reprise de la *propagande missionnaire* juive. J'utilise ici

breux également sont ceux pour qui Rm 2 reprend manifestement des questions et des *topoi* de la littérature juive, déjà présents dans la Bible⁽¹²⁾. On peut donc, sans grand risque d'erreur, dire que le début de l'argumentation paulinienne est, quant au vocabulaire et aux thèmes abordés, de tonalité biblique et juive⁽¹³⁾.

Pourquoi cette constatation ne vaudrait-elle pas pour le thème de la justice divine, tellement prégnant en de nombreux livres vétéro-testamentaires et juifs, et dont plusieurs harmoniques se retrouvent en Rm 1,18-2,29? Certes, le lecteur même pressé ne peut que marquer un temps de surprise, lorsqu'il passe de l'affirmation positive, en 1,17, selon laquelle l'Évangile révèle la modalité de la justice divine en son extension maximale (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν), à la déclara-

l'adjectif « apologétique » à dessein, car il ne renvoie pas à une propagande ou même au prosélytisme, qu'on ne saurait appliquer au judaïsme, comme le rappellent très opportunément E. WILL-Cl. ORRIEUX, « Prosélytisme juif »? *Histoire d'une erreur* (Les Belles Lettres; Paris 1992).

(12) Ainsi, au v. 4, le thème de la patience et de la miséricorde divines en vue de la conversion: Sir 18,10-14; Sg 11,2-3; 12,10.19; 15,1; 4 Esd 7,132-139. Au v. 5a celui de la dureté du cœur: Dt 9,27; 31,27; etc.; 1 QS 1,6; 2,14-18; CD 2,17-20; 3,4-12; au v. 5b, le topos du trésor dans les cieus comme conséquence de l'agir: 4 Esd 7,75-77; 8,33-36; 9,7; 2 Ba 14,12-13; 24,1; 44,14; Ps Salomon 9,5; également dans le NT, Mt 6,19ss et parallèles; pour la littérature rabbinique, cf. P. VOLZ, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Tübingen 1934) 307. Quant à l'expression « jour de la colère » (ἡμέρα ὀργῆς, v. 5c), unique dans le corpus paulinien, voir So 1,15.18; 2,3; Test Levi 3,3; 4 Esd 7,38-44, etc.; également Apo 6,17. Pour la rétribution selon les œuvres (v. 6), voir Ps 61,13 LXX; Pr 24,12; Jb 34,11; Si 16,14; Aboth 3,15, et, dans le NT, Mt 16,27; Apo 2,23). Aux vv. 7.10, le couple δόξα καὶ τιμὴ semble venir des doxologies de la tradition liturgique juive; il fut repris par le NT (1 P 1,7; 2 P 1,17; Apo 4,9-11; 5,12-13; 21,16) et la tradition chrétienne postérieure. L'autre couple, ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς (v. 8c), apparaît fréquemment dans la LXX, et le binôme du v. 9a, θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία, vient de l'AT (Dt 28,32.55.57; Is 8,22; 30,6); on le retrouve en Rm 8,35 et, pas tout à fait sous la même forme, en 2 Co 6,4. Pour les versets suivants, cf. infra.

(13) Par certains de ses traits, en particulier la citation du Ps 51 au début du ch. 3, Rm 1,18-3,20 pourrait donner l'impression d'être un *rib*, mais il n'en est rien: il faut distinguer *rib* et *diatribe*, qui n'ont, chacun le sait, ni la même articulation ni la même fonction. Que la première unité logique de Rm ne soit pas un *rib*, on le constate facilement en considérant chacune des sous-unités argumentatives: Rm 1,18-32 formule un constat, et Rm 2 n'a pas pour fonction première d'accuser (le non juif ou le juif), bien plutôt de niveler les statuts; quant à Rm 3,9-20 il souligne seulement, et par le bas (universalité de l'injustice humaine), ce nivellement.

tion de 1,18 où, sans aucune transition, l'Apôtre amorce un exposé sur la réaction divine négative, appelée colère, à l'égard de toute injustice humaine: s'il y a un lien entre la réaction positive et la négative, pourquoi ne pas l'avoir explicité?

Notons d'abord — et cela confirme l'hypothèse d'une écriture paulinienne biblique dans la manière de traiter certains thèmes — que, déjà dans les Écritures, colère et justice divines sont plusieurs fois contiguës (ou presque)⁽¹⁴⁾. Et si elles ne sont jamais directement articulées ou accouplées («la juste colère de Dieu» ou «ta colère, Seigneur, est juste», etc.), en les mettant en parallèle, les textes suggèrent néanmoins leurs rapports: (1) la colère a déjà frappé ou frappera les pécheurs; elle montre comment Dieu réagit face à la méchanceté des impies ou à l'injustice des hommes, fussent-ils membres de son peuple; (2) les orants opprimés ou persécutés appellent la colère de Dieu sur les impies (Ps 7,7); au contraire, lorsqu'ils sont à leur tour frappés par elle pour leur(s) péché(s), ils demandent qu'elle cesse, et que, comme une étape de punition ou de nécessaire purification, elle laisse place à la clémence et à la pitié (Ps 84,5-8)⁽¹⁵⁾, car ils sont persuadés que, pour eux et pour tous ceux qui reconnaissent leur péché, la colère ne saurait être le dernier mot de Dieu; (3) en l'un ou l'autre des passages mentionnés, spécialement en Ps 7,7-12, plusieurs composantes sont égrenées, en une courbe ascendante, semblable à celle de Rm 1-2: la colère contre les méchants, le jugement effectué en fonction de ce que chacun a été, juste ou injuste; la connaissance des cœurs et la reconnaissance finale de la justice divine⁽¹⁶⁾; (4) les passages considérés montrent enfin que la colère de Dieu ne s'oppose pas à sa justice comme à son contraire, car la colère divine à l'égard des méchants va de pair avec le rétablissement du droit des autres, pauvres et opprimés; s'il y a opposition, c'est entre colère et pitié, entre châtement et miséricorde, perçues comme deux

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cf. Ps 7,7-12; Ps 84,5-12 LXX; Mi 7,9; Is 59,17.19.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Noter à ce propos la façon dont la LXX rend le Ps 7,12: «Dieu... ne portant pas la colère chaque jour» (reprise d'Ex 34,6), alors que, dans l'hébreu, on lit «Dieu s'irritant (ou «châtiant») chaque jour».

⁽¹⁶⁾ D'abord l'ὀργή: Ps 7,7.12; Rm 1,19; 2,5.8. Ensuite le κρίνειν: Ps 7,9; Rm 2,2-3 (κρίμα); 2,12.16 (κρίνειν); mais à la différence du Ps 7,12 et d'autres passages (LXX: Is 30,18; 63,7; Ps 49,6; 74,7; Si 35,12; etc.), Paul ne nomme jamais Dieu κριτής. Sur la connaissance des cœurs et le jugement qui en découle: Ps 7,10b; Rm 2,15-16.29. Enfin l'être juste (δίκαιος; δικαιοσύνη): Ps 7,12; Rm 1,17; 2,5 (δικαιοκρισία).

étapes d'un même processus, comme deux composantes de la même justice divine⁽¹⁷⁾. Ainsi, en n'explicitant pas, au début de son argumentation, le lien existant entre justice (1,17) et colère divines (1,18), Paul procède à la manière des écrivains bibliques, qui ne les accouplent jamais syntaxiquement.

A l'exemple des livres bibliques, les auteurs de la littérature juive intertestamentaire, Pseudépigraphes et autres, n'articulent pas davantage syntaxiquement — du moins à ma connaissance — colère et justice divines. Mais ils ne les opposent pas; on peut même raisonnablement conclure, à partir des quelques passages mentionnant l'une et l'autre, que pour le judaïsme d'alors comme pour Rm 1-2, qui le reprend sur ce point, la colère est un instrument de la justice divine⁽¹⁸⁾.

2. Les composantes de la justice divine en Rm 1,18-3,20

Si l'on veut d'ailleurs regarder d'un peu plus près la façon dont est distribué le vocabulaire afférent à la justice en 1,18-3,20, une progression se dessine nettement. Paul ne se contente pas de mentionner brièvement, à la manière du Ps 7, quelques composantes de la justice divine, il les reprend pratiquement toutes et systématiquement. Voyons comment.

Suivant en cela le judaïsme de son temps, qui attendait avec impatience la manifestation de la colère sur les impies, sur les oppresseurs d'Israël, et le rétablissement du droit des pauvres, des opprimés, des fidèles du Seigneur, Paul commence par parler de la justice

⁽¹⁷⁾ Ce que Mi 7,9 exprime très bien et en très peu de mots.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Cf. *Test. Job* 43,11-13, qui, après avoir insisté sur la colère divine à l'égard des méchants (en particulier contre Élihoun), finit ainsi, sans aucune transition: «juste est le Seigneur, véridiques sont ses jugements. Auprès de lui pas d'acception des personnes. Il nous jugera tous pareillement» (v. 13). La colère ne va pas contre l'impartialité ni contre la justice, elle en est plutôt la manifestation négative, (a) antérieure et préparant à la miséricorde, pour qui se repent, (b) définitive pour les impénitents. Mêmes idées en 1 Hen 63,8, mais sans que le mot colère soit prononcé. Paul, comme les Pseudépigraphes, utilise un langage apocalyptique soigneusement évité par Philon, qui mentionne très rarement la colère divine (*opif. mundi* 156, par ex.), et déclare que ce sentiment, purement humain, ne saurait être attribué à Dieu, sinon de manière figurée; cf. *quod Deus* 52, 60, 68, 71; *de somniis* I, 89-91 et 235-236. C'est probablement Rm qui fait pour la première fois le lien syntaxique entre colère et justice (cf. 3,5: «Dieu serait-il injuste lui qui porte/exerce la colère?»).

divine rétributive, celle qui juge⁽¹⁹⁾ et qui sanctionne l'agir humain, et qu'ailleurs j'ai appelée « justice ultérieure »⁽²⁰⁾, avec sa dimension punitive — ce que le mot ὀργή résume drastiquement —, mais aussi positive, étant bien entendu que Dieu rétribue chacun, le juif comme le grec, en fonction de l'agir (2,6) et avec impartialité (2,11).

Jusqu'à 2,11 d'ailleurs, l'argumentation paulinienne ne fait que reprendre fidèlement les composantes attribuées à la justice divine rétributive par les écrits bibliques et juifs. Comme celui de 2,6 sur la rétribution selon les œuvres, le principe énonçant ou rappelant l'impartialité divine en 2,1 a aussi son origine dans les Écritures⁽²¹⁾. On ne peut qu'admirer ici la manière dont Paul sait progressivement présenter les composantes de la justice divine. S'il commence par décrire la justice distributive de Dieu en ses effets négatifs, mais aussi positifs, il passe à ce qui caractérise principalement, même et surtout selon le judaïsme, cette rétribution, et qui la différencie de tout exercice humain de la justice. Mais l'impartialité elle-même trouve son point d'ancrage dans la connaissance vraie que Dieu a de tout homme: c'est parce qu'il sonde les reins et les cœurs, parce qu'il voit ce qu'il y a au plus profond de l'homme, que Dieu ne se laisse pas impressionner, séduire, voire tromper par les apparences (2,16a)⁽²²⁾.

(19) Paul, répétons-le, dit que Dieu juge et jugera (κρίνειν), mais il ne lui applique jamais le substantif κριτής ou le participe ὁ κρίνων, a fortiori le participe ὁ κατακρίνων (cf. Rm 8,34: «qui condamnera? Christ Jésus...?»). Une étude serrée de Rm montre que ce silence n'est en rien dû au hasard: l'image que Paul a de Dieu n'est pas celle du juge.

(20) Sur la manière dont Paul développe par touches successives et en une progression exemplaire les composantes de la justice rétributive en Rm 1,18–3,20 et 3,21–4,25, voir ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?*, 234–243.

(21) a) dans la Bible hébraïque: Dt 10,17; 1 S 16,7; 2 Ch 19,7; Jb 34,19 (et Pr 18,5; 24,23–25; 28,21 et Ps 82,1–4). b) Le principe est repris plusieurs fois dans les livres deutérocanoniques et pseudépigraphes: Si 35,12–14; Sg 6,7; Test Job 4,7–9; 43,12–13; 1 Esd 4,39; Jub 5,12–16; 21,3–5; Ps Sal 2,15–18; 2,32–35; 2 Ba 13,8–12; 44,2–4; *Ant. Bibl.* 20,3–4; 1 Hen 63,8–9. c) On le retrouve aussi dans la littérature rabbinique, chez Philon, et d) dans le NT, où il ne s'applique pas seulement à Dieu (Ac 10,34; Rm 2,11; Ga 2,6; Ep 6,9; Col 3,25; Jc 2,1; 1 P 1,17), mais également à Jésus (Mt 22,16 et par). Cf. J. M. BASSLER, *Divine Impartiality. Paul and a Theological Axiom* (Chico, CA 1982).

(22) Sur le thème biblique de la connaissance que Dieu seul a du cœur humain, voir 1 R 16,7 LXX; 3 R 8,39 LXX; Jr 11,20; 12,3; 17,10 (où l'on notera le rapport établi entre connaissance des cœurs et rétribution juste); 20,12 (même observation); Ps 7,10; 16,3 LXX; 43,22 LXX; 138,23 LXX;

Si, au début de son argumentation, Paul n'a donc pas voulu préciser voire définir ce qu'il entend par justice, nous pouvons maintenant en pressentir les raisons, une en particulier: son discours reprend plusieurs axiomes bibliques sur la justice divine et suit fidèlement, jusqu'à Rm 2,11 au moins, l'interprétation qu'en faisaient les penseurs juifs de son temps. Mais il va cesser de les suivre, pour d'autres raisons qu'il va nous falloir lentement percevoir.

II. Les écarts d'une écriture «inculturée»⁽²³⁾

Commençant sa réflexion à partir et à l'aide de celle des auteurs bibliques et du judaïsme contemporain, Paul n'éprouve ainsi aucun besoin de définir les termes qu'il utilise. On peut effectivement qualifier sa théologie d'inculturée, au sens où elle implique un cheminement à l'intérieur d'un monde de représentations théologiques, pour être compris de ses contemporains, surtout juifs, et ainsi les faire aller plus loin! On dira sans doute que l'Apôtre aurait pu signaler au début de son argumentation, même en peu de mots, que telle était sa manière de procéder. Pareille objection ne peut venir que de lecteurs peu familiers avec son écriture et ses constantes. Une connaissance même sommaire de ses techniques rhétoriques permet d'ailleurs de comprendre pourquoi Paul n'a pas tout de suite énoncé explicitement ce qui fait le ressort de la première section de la *probatio* (Rm 1,18–4,25), à savoir le nivellement sotériologique (par le bas, puis par le haut) du juif et du non-juif. Car il ne s'agit pas seulement de *captatio benevolentiae*, d'astuce, de ruse même, pour faire admettre des idées nouvelles voire scandaleuses pour des oreilles juives, mais de nécessité logique. En effet, ce ne sont pas les principes bibliques qui changent, bien plutôt leurs modalités qui deviennent inouïes. Voilà pourquoi l'Apôtre se devait de reprendre ces principes, de s'appuyer sur eux pour montrer ensuite leur application surprenante.

On peut d'ailleurs se demander si l'écriture de Paul en Rm 1–2 n'est pas doublement inculturée, car si elle s'appuie sur les principes de la justice distributive biblique, elle semble également proche des

Pr 15,11; 17,3; 21,2; également Pr 24,12 (où est encore établi le lien entre connaissance des cœurs et rétribution juste, c'est-à-dire selon les œuvres).

⁽²³⁾ Je reprends ici l'adjectif («inculturato») utilisé par PENNA, «Rm 1,18–2,29», 114.

topoi de la philosophie populaire stoïco-cynique de son temps: les écrivains juifs n'étaient pas les seuls à critiquer les mœurs décadentes de leur époque. Mais les thèmes empruntés ne se restreignent pas à l'aspect négatif; d'autres expressions de Rm 1-2 ont leur correspondant dans le monde hellénistique, comme le «*nomos agraphos* écrit dans l'âme», qui deviendra un thème fréquent dans le stoïcisme et le néoplatonisme⁽²⁴⁾ et devait déjà être connu, voire diffusé au temps de Paul, thème en tout cas absent des écrits rabbiniques, où la Loi divine n'est pas inscrite sur le cœur des *goïm* mais sur celui des fils de l'Alliance, selon les promesses formulées en Jr 31,33 (= 38,33 LXX)⁽²⁵⁾.

L'écriture paulinienne se greffe donc sur d'autres (biblique, juive, et peut-être aussi, de manière moindre et indirecte, philosophique), d'où elle tire ses concepts et ses principes. A vrai dire, plus que la matérialité des emprunts faits par l'Apôtre et reconnus par tous les exégètes, c'est leur raison d'être rhétorique et pastorale qu'il nous a fallu pressentir, avant d'observer les glissements significatifs, puisque l'inculturation de la pensée de Paul n'est pas sans avoir des effets sur cela même qu'elle a sollicité.

Jusqu'en Rm 2,11 inclusivement, répétons-le, toutes les affirmations peuvent être acceptées par un juif. Trois faits semblent toutefois montrer que Paul laisse dans l'ombre le lien sur lequel l'Écriture et le judaïsme insistent tant, celui entre Dieu (sa justice) et la Loi: (1) l'injustice humaine stigmatisée en 1,18 n'est pas dite consister d'abord et principalement en une transgression de la Loi, (2) en toute la première section de Rm, cette Loi n'est pas davantage décrite comme venant de Dieu ou exprimant pleinement sa justice⁽²⁶⁾; (3) elle n'est d'autre part mentionnée pour la première fois qu'en Rm 2,12: utilisant la technique du silence, Paul indique ainsi indirectement que la Loi n'est ni le seul ni le premier mot de la justice divi-

⁽²⁴⁾ Cf., par exemple, des auteurs postérieurs à Paul, comme Dion Chrysostome 76,3; Maxime de Tyr 27,6,d; Julien *or.* 7,5:209c; Proclus *remp.* 2,307:8-9; Plotin 5,3.4:2.

⁽²⁵⁾ F. KUHR, «Römer 2,14f und die Verheissung bei Jeremia 31,31ff», *ZNW* 55 (1964) 243-261. Et STRACK-BILLERBECK III, 89-91.

⁽²⁶⁾ Le lecteur aura évidemment noté qu'en Rm 1-4 la Loi n'est jamais divinement qualifiée (comme «Loi de Dieu», «Sa Loi»). Noter néanmoins comment, en rendant contiguës les termes νόμος et θεός, Rm 2,23 reprend textuellement le point de vue du juif, qui établit un rapport direct entre transgression de la Loi et mépris de (la volonté de) Dieu.

ne distributive, qu'elle ne l'épuise pas ou n'en rend pas compte de manière exclusive, puisque Dieu peut rétribuer sans elle en toute justice (2,12).

On doit ici noter la nature profondément paradoxale de l'argumentation paulinienne: au moment même où elle sollicite un principe énoncé par la Loi, celui de l'impartialité divine⁽²⁷⁾, elle lui donne une application inconnue du judaïsme, puisqu'elle en vient à énoncer la limite de cette même Loi: quiconque n'a pas (ou n'est pas sujet de) la loi mosaïque ne saurait être jugé selon ses exigences! Utilisation étonnante mais cohérente du principe, puisqu'elle en montre l'extension totale dans l'espace et le temps, avec l'exemple d'Abraham, incirconcis, non encore sujet de la Loi et pourtant justifié, car Dieu, en son impartialité, ne pouvait compter comme justice que sa foi et non les œuvres requises par la Loi (Rm 4). Partant du principe d'impartialité, grâce auquel il pouvait affirmer, en un premier temps, que Dieu n'exerçait pas sa justice seulement par le moyen de la Loi (Rm 2,12-16), Paul en vient ainsi à conclure, en appliquant le même principe, que tous sans exception sont justifiés de la même manière, sans la Loi, par la foi seule (3,21-4,25)!

Le principe de l'impartialité divine n'est pas le seul élément où se vérifie à la fois le caractère traditionnel et l'originalité de la réflexion paulinienne. On pourrait faire des remarques analogues à propos du thème, biblique et juif, de la Loi inscrite dans les cœurs (Rm 2,15a). Ce qui vient d'être dit suffit cependant à expliquer en partie l'absence de définition de la justice divine durant la première section de la *probatio*: pourquoi l'Apôtre définirait-il ce qu'il reprend de l'Écriture et du judaïsme de son temps? *Car ce ne sont pas les principes de la justice divine qui sont changés, mais leur application qui acquiert une extension et des modalités jusque-là impensables.* Paul n'a pas à définir la justice divine avant d'en présenter les modalités: il part de ce qui, dans le judaïsme d'alors se dit de mieux sur elle (par contrastes et similitudes), sur son exercice (Dieu voit tout, sait tout, peut tout, rétribue tout, et punit le malfaisant: un juge acceptant le mal ou impuissant à punir le méchant serait incapable de justice), ensuite sur ses modalités (la rétribution selon les œuvres, l'impartialité). Ce n'est qu'après de telles prémisses que l'argumentation peut

⁽²⁷⁾ Il est probable que la présence du principe d'impartialité divine dans l'ensemble formant la Torah (cf. Dt 10,17) soit assez tardive, mais à la suite de Paul, je ne considère pas ici l'histoire de sa rédaction.

sortir des catégories juives ou, mieux, en montrer la logique extrême, inouïe, manifestée précisément par l'Évangile⁽²⁸⁾. Soit dit en passant, bien des erreurs dans l'interprétation de Rm 2 auraient été évitées, si l'on avait tenu compte de cet aspect dynamique et inculturé de l'argumentation paulinienne⁽²⁹⁾.

III. Raisons liées à la *dispositio* de l'épître

Comme nous l'avons déjà noté, aucune des raisons rhétoriques ne doit être exclue: pour ne pas encourir l'incompréhension ou le refus pur et simple, Paul, en bon orateur, ne pouvait, dès l'abord, dire que la justice divine s'était définitivement manifestée en Jésus Christ *sans la Loi*. Mieux vaut faire un bout de chemin avec les principes et les certitudes jusque-là admises, avant d'aller hardiment (cf. Rm 15,15) plus loin!

Mais les exigences de la rhétorique n'expliquent pas seulement pourquoi Paul ne définit pas la justice divine au début de son épître et durant la première section (Rm 1,18-4,25). Il faut aller à la fin de son argumentation, en Rm 9-11, pour saisir les raisons principales de son silence: on comprend que l'Apôtre n'ait pas énoncé dès la *propositio* principale du discours (Rm 1,16-17) les traits saillants d'une justice divine dont il ne dévoilera toutes les composantes et modalités qu'en fin de parcours. N'essayons pas d'imposer a posteriori des raisons qui n'en sont pas, mais simplement de percevoir la logique qui se dégage de la *dispositio* même de cette section.

1. Rm 9-11 et le thème de la justice divine

Si en Rm 1,18-4,25 le thème de la justice divine — comme juste rétribution — et de ses modalités est abordé dès le commencement — c'est-à-dire dès la *subpropositio* de 1,18 — et traité tout au long de la section, en Rm 9 il en va autrement: la question ne surgit qu'à propos du caractère apparemment arbitraire des choix divins (9,14), et par la suite elle n'est plus explicitement mentionnée qu'en 10,3. Mais la rareté du vocabulaire ne doit pas faire trop vite conclure que notre thème n'a aucune fonction significative en cette section. Sup-

(28) Sur le rapport entre justice divine, Évangile et Loi, voir ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?*, 240, 241.

(29) On trouvera un résumé des positions opposées sur la fonction de Rm 1,18-2,29 en PENNA, «Rm 1,18-2,29», 111-114.

posant d'ailleurs admise son importance dans l'argumentation⁽³⁰⁾, rappelons seulement combien, de Rm 1-4 à 9-11, il a subi une évolution notable. En Rm 1-4, l'Apôtre, partant des préoccupations juives relatives à la manifestation eschatologique de la justice divine, ne la considérait qu'en sa dimension ultérieure de rétribution impartiale d'un agir humain bon ou mauvais, rétribution qui s'était révélée, avec l'Évangile, comme une remise gracieuse des péchés pour tous sans discrimination aucune, comme une transformation des cœurs, bref comme une justification par la foi seule. En Rm 9, elle apparaît comme absolument antérieure et surtout indépendante de toute réponse humaine future, positive («J'appelle celui-ci, car il me sera fidèle») ou négative («Je n'appelle pas cet autre, car il va me désobéir ou s'attacher aux idoles»). Appel et non-appel, encore nommés amour et haine (9,13), n'y ont pour raison d'être que la manifestation de la puissance et de la gloire divines (9,17).

Paul soulève ici une objection, qui va lui permettre d'ailleurs de dépasser l'idée d'une justice strictement définie comme rétribution impartiale. On conçoit en effet que pour Dieu, la justice consiste essentiellement à se faire reconnaître pour ce qu'il est, le Dieu tout-puissant (9,17). Mais n'est-ce pas ce que veulent précisément montrer tous les (faux) dieux? Suffit-il aux décisions et choix divins de n'être pas basés sur la réponse humaine pour mériter le qualificatif de justes? Car les choix divins présentés en Rm 9,6-13 ont toutes les caractéristiques de l'arbitraire et de la partialité, semblant contredire l'axiome d'impartialité qui présidait à l'argumentation de la première section. Or, Paul ne répond que de façon très sommaire à l'objection: écartant seulement la logique d'une justice conçue en termes de rétribution, il insiste sur la globalité et la finalité des choix, bref sur l'existence d'un plan divin, où le rejet et le non-appel ne sont pas le dernier mot de Dieu. Ainsi, Rm 9 n'énonce pas explicitement les caractéristiques de cette justice divine antérieure qui, appelant les uns et écartant les autres, semble partielle: il faut aller à la fin du parcours, en Rm 11,28-32, pour que soit mentionné ce qui la meut et lui fait retrouver son impartialité, à savoir le salut de tous, juifs et non-juifs. Justice paradoxale, puisqu'elle intègre l'appel *et* le non-appel pour le salut de tous, mettant par avance toutes les réponses humaines négatives au service de ce dessein salvifique. Qu'on ne s'étonne

⁽³⁰⁾ Cf. ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?*, 163-173 et 243-249, où est démontré ce point.

pas de voir Paul parler des choix divins initiaux (cf. 9,6-18) dans la section finale de sa *probatio*: c'est toujours au terme d'un itinéraire qu'on peut en relire les constantes et revenir aux commencements; la justice divine antérieure décrite en Rm 9-11 permet ainsi paradoxalement d'éclairer et de confirmer les propos de la première section sur la justice divine ultérieure, celle qui assure la rétribution impartiale et la justification gracieuse de tous.

2. Rhétorique et justice de Dieu

Faisons encore rebondir la question: à la fin de l'argumentation, en Rm 11, n'aurait-il pas été souhaitable que Paul reprenne sommairement les changements opérés, pour en souligner l'importance? Bref, Paul n'aurait-il pas dû résumer les composantes inouïes de la justice divine que l'Évangile a permis de manifester?

Une première réponse rhétorique s'impose: si Paul ne résume pas le parcours sémantique grâce auquel il a déployé les composantes de la justice divine, c'est tout simplement parce que les diverses *propositiones* — et donc la *probatio* — de Rm 9-11 s'attardent sur d'autres points: la constance et la fermeté des choix divins en Rm 9, la foi au Christ comme unique moyen de justification en Rm 10, le salut de tout Israël en Rm 11. A cette première explication, ajoutons-en une autre, toujours rhétorique mais plus déterminante: toute l'argumentation de Rm 9-11 allant, en un suspense croissant, vers la révélation du dessein salvifique de Dieu et en même temps du rôle paradoxalement salvifique de ce que Paul appelle l'endurcissement d'Israël⁽³¹⁾, le thème de la justice divine (*antérieure*) n'y constitue pas une fin en soi, mais seulement un jalon qui permet d'élargir la discussion en soulignant les enjeux des choix divins.

Ces réponses, d'ordre rhétorique, pertinentes s'il en est, n'expliquent cependant pas tout. L'argumentation de Rm montre également qu'en déplaçant les questions relatives à la justice divine, Paul a en quelque sorte rendu inutile une définition, fût-elle en bonne et due forme. Il nous faut maintenant aborder cet aspect de la question.

⁽³¹⁾ Pour la nature fortement apocalyptique de cette section de l'épître, voir E. E. JOHNSON, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11* (Atlanta, GA 1989).

IV. Une justice divine définie par ses modalités

La *propositio* principale de l'épître, Rm 1,16-17, indique sans aucun doute possible que la justice divine ne sera pas considérée sans cette modalité⁽³²⁾ qui la caractérise entièrement et se nomme foi. La *probatio* de Rm n'a donc pas pour fonction première de dire abstraitement ce qu'est la justice divine, mais de montrer *comment* elle se manifeste: «de la foi à la foi». Et Rm 3,21 ajoutera que le «de la foi à la foi» est à comprendre de façon exclusive, qu'il équivaut à «sans la Loi». En d'autres termes, en présentant par touches successives la manière dont la justice divine se révèle, la *probatio* en sa totalité est une progressive apocalypse des modalités inouïes qu'a voulu prendre cette justice; la définir équivaut à en énoncer et à en égrener les composantes: la punition des injustices, la rétribution selon les œuvres, l'impartialité, la justification de quiconque croit, l'élection gracieuse, etc. Dire ce qu'est la justice divine consiste ainsi, pour l'Auteur de Rm, à exposer *comment* Dieu l'exerce, cet exercice constituant une «définition» adéquate, parce que respectueuse des modalités les plus connues et reçues (en 1,18-2,11), mais aussi des plus inouïes (en 3,21-4,25 et 9,6-11,32), qui permettent de la reconnaître comme telle.

Car c'est précisément sur les modalités selon lesquelles cette justice s'est révélée avec l'Évangile qu'achoppe le judaïsme, qui a préféré rester fidèle à une justice divine révélée par la Loi et advenant par elle (10,3). Voilà pourquoi Paul a refait patiemment tout le chemin, s'écartant progressivement des positions du judaïsme, pour présenter les modalités de la justice divine définitivement révélées et confirmées avec l'avènement du Christ.

On voit dès lors pourquoi, dès la *propositio* principale (1,16-17), Paul a rassemblé des termes apparemment opposés, l'Évangile, connotant la pure grâce, et la justice divine, identifiée à la rétribution selon les œuvres; c'est en effet l'Évangile qui a permis de manifester pleinement ses modalités, autrement dit de révéler qu'elle est gracieuse non seulement comme justice ultérieure mais surtout comme justice antérieure, et que, s'il existe une bonne nouvelle à annoncer, c'est bien celle-là.

⁽³²⁾ La foi est d'abord réponse de l'homme à Dieu (Rm 4) et ne semble donc pas devoir être une modalité de la justice divine. Mais toute la technique rhétorique de Paul en Rm consiste à rattacher tellement la foi (humaine) à la justice divine qu'elle devient pratiquement une *modalité* de sa manifestation (cf. 3,21-22; 10,6-10).

Ainsi, en Rm, Paul cherche moins à définir la justice divine qu'à montrer comment elle s'est manifestée et continue de le faire. Les verbes qu'il utilise dans ses *propositiones* (1,17; 1,18; 3,21) attirent d'ailleurs l'attention du lecteur sur la *manifestation* de cette justice, et le fil de l'argumentation indique bien que tel est le propos de Paul: montrer que la justice divine, en sa logique, menait paradoxalement vers sa manifestation ultime, Jésus Christ, qu'elle s'expose en quelque sorte définitivement avec le Christ en croix (cf. Rm 3,25-26 où l'on retrouve d'ailleurs le vocabulaire de la manifestation). Non point définition, mais révélation.

Conclusion

Le parcours qui vient d'être effectué vérifie une conviction toujours plus partagée en exégèse: un terme, une expression, un thème n'acquièrent leurs connotations et leur sens que dans et même au terme de l'argumentation où ils ont une fonction précise. Ainsi en est-il du thème de «la justice de Dieu» en Rm. Ce point mérite d'autant plus notre attention que la réflexion de Paul en cette épître apparaît à beaucoup incohérente, pour le moins bizarre.

Il nous a fallu reconnaître que si Rm ne donne pas une définition formelle de la justice divine, c'est que l'argumentation insiste uniquement sur sa manifestation, ses modalités, et indique comment elle se donne à reconnaître — en ses longs méandres, ceux de notre histoire, que Paul trace à grands traits sans vouloir la maîtriser par des concepts. Le vocabulaire de la manifestation et de la révélation devrait alerter les exégètes; son rôle en Rm n'est malheureusement pas encore assez perçu. C'est pourtant là que s'indiquent les linéaments d'une solution pour la difficile question de la prolifération du vocabulaire afférent à la justice divine! Fidèle en cela au judaïsme qui attendait sa révélation finale et puissante, l'Apôtre montre progressivement que cette apocalypse de la justice divine est allée au delà de toutes les espérances; partant de ce fonds biblique et juif, qui lui permet de répéter les composantes rétributives de cette justice, tant de fois proclamées dans les écrits juifs antérieurs ou contemporains, il en arrive à indiquer comment elle s'est manifestée pleinement et définitivement par l'Évangile, non seulement comme justice distributive (ultérieure) paradoxale et inattendue, mais surtout comme justice antérieure, prophétisée depuis toujours et tracée dans l'ordonnance même des Écritures. Oui, tout l'effort de Paul en Rm est

bien de mettre en rapport les modalités inouïes selon lesquelles la justice divine s'est manifestée et les prophéties qui permettent, toujours après coup, d'en saisir la cohérence jusque-là cachée.

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SUMMARY

This article examines a silence in Rom: although there is much there about God's justice, the Apostle does not give a short and precise definition of exactly what he means by "God's justice", neither at the beginning nor at the end of his argumentation. The answer is found in several places. This shows, most importantly, that Paul does not omit the definition of justice (human and divine) by an oversight. Rather, the reasons for his silence are mainly rhetorical. For him it is a question of modalities (the "how") and these alone show, and thus "define", divine justice.

When Was Revelation Conceived?

I. An Alternative Hypothesis

At first sight Rev was written under Domitian (AD 81-96). Most scholars think so⁽¹⁾. They probably believe Irenaeus, who says that the "apocalyptic vision was seen no such long time ago, but almost in our generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian" (say, AD c.95)⁽²⁾. What Irenaeus says is straightforward, categorical, fairly precise and very credible. Domitian has always been remembered as a stereotypically bad emperor; a persecutor, who insisted on emperor-worship.

Perhaps he was. But there are internal traces of an earlier origin. Some scholars regard this or that verse as written under Domitian or later, but imagined back in order to antedate the work; or as taken, under Domitian or later, from an earlier written source or sources⁽³⁾. Others favour an origin wholly before AD 70⁽⁴⁾. Hengel thinks of Rev as finished under Trajan (AD 98-117) but essentially early Johannine, with a nucleus that could have been "written in the time after the shock of the Neronian persecution, the beginning of the Judaeen war, the suicide of Nero and the civil war"⁽⁵⁾.

To my mind Rev was conceived at Patmos during the autumn of AD 69, and wholly or largely written during that winter. The

(1) Not least R. H. CHARLES, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, I-II (Edinburgh 1920). I have been much helped and encouraged by criticisms and suggestions; from, among many others, Prof. C. F. D. Moule, Prof. Fergus Millar, Prof. J. L. Houlden, Dr. Tom Wright and Dr. R. W. L. Moberly.

(2) *Adversus Haereses* 5,30,3; see also n. 13.

(3) Antedating, e.g. H. B. SWETE, *Apocalypse* (London 1906) 221. Earlier material: e.g. T. W. CRAFER in the *New Comm. on Holy Scripture* (London 1928) NT 682.

(4) E.g. J. A. T. ROBINSON, *Redating the New Testament* (London 1976) Chapter VIII with references to previous literature. Recently K. GENTRY, *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating of the Book of Revelation* (Tyler, TX 1989).

(5) M. HENGEL *The Johannine Question* (ET; London 1989) 51, 81 and note. See also A. A. BELL, "The Date of the Apocalypse. The Evidence of Some Roman Historians Reconsidered", *NTS* 25 (1979) 93-102.

quasi-letters to Asian churches (chapters 2–3, clockwise from Ephesus) were written or updated later, on the mainland. But the main vision was, I suggest, discernibly a response to sensational secular news, reaching Patmos by slow old boat (via Miletus?) during the later months of AD 69. We know much about the distances which were travelled by current news during that year⁽⁶⁾. The crucial dating clue is no particular verse; it is — see p.384 below — the sheer amount of space that is given to, and the excited but narrowly prophetic emphasis on, a supposedly imminent fall of ‘Babylon’.

The autumn of AD 69 was a time when there would have been widespread public interest in the number of western ‘kings’ of the east (Caesars, rulers of Rome) who had — recently, literally, bloodily and sensationally — fallen. Three of them (Nero, Galba and Otho) had fallen thus in rapid succession. But οἱ πάντε ἐπεσαν, as many as five had fallen (17,10); because Julius Caesar and Gaius were remembered as having fallen thus, earlier. ὁ εἷς ἔστιν, the one (Vitellius) ‘is’. ὁ ἄλλος οὐπω ἦλθεν, the other has not yet come. A man called Vespasian has been proclaimed. He is backed by many more legions. But he is an elderly nobody, dawdling in the east. ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μεῖναι, he cannot last. In such a context the ambiguous indicators in 17,9-10 (the seven ‘hills’ and ‘kings’, the five who ‘fell’, ‘the one’ who ‘is’, ‘the other’ who ‘has not yet come and cannot last’) become unambiguous. They, and the many other possible indicators, begin to ‘add up’; as do many dating clues in Daniel.

There is almost no hard evidence that Christians were persecuted by Rome under Domitian. But they could have been — if they ‘asked for it’, by being noticed proselytising. Rev has also been thought to be Domitianic because of the references (13,11-18; cp. 20,4) to compulsory emperor-worship. Rev is angry about much; including an image that had been erected, in honour of the beast that, though wounded by the sword, yet lived. But that form of words fits the unlamented — and very undeified — Nero; who (in AD 69) had recently been deposed, and had committed suicide, but was widely rumoured to be alive⁽⁷⁾. Greeks had — for complex

⁽⁶⁾ From the *Histories* of Tacitus; as noted and elucidated by e.g. K. WELLESLEY, *The Long Year AD 69* (London 1975; Bristol 1989) esp. 13.

⁽⁷⁾ Tacitus, *Hist.* 1,2; 2,8. Suetonius, *Life of N.* 57. P. TRUDINGER, ‘The ‘Nero Redivivus’ Rumor and the Date of the Apocalypse of John’, *St Mark’s Review* (Canberra) 131 (1987) 43-44.

reasons that have by now been impressively analysed by S.R.F. Price — long insisted on worshipping the current live Caesar, whoever he was; Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Vespasian, Domitian. Rome had tended to play down or ignore, if only in the west, the monarchical and superhuman implications of such a cult. Domitian, as the son and brother (by blood) of *nouveaux* but deified dead Caesars, liked the implications and played them up, even in the west⁽⁸⁾. But what he unwisely chose to say and do, in distant Rome, was not as crucial, for the development of the provincial and local cults in Asia Minor, as some widely-studied NT commentators, notably Barclay, have supposed⁽⁹⁾. There had been

⁽⁸⁾ S.R.F. PRICE, *Rituals and Power* (Cambridge 1984; P1986) *passim*, though 196-198 cautiously discuss the date of Rev. Domitian was typecast, in retrospect, as a 'bad' emperor. Suetonius (*Life of D.* 13) tells, as a typical example of D.'s impolitic arrogance, the story that he dictated a circular letter, to be issued in the name of his procurators, with, as 'incipit', "Dominus ac deus noster hoc fieri jubet" (Our Lord and God orders this to be done). Such language was not new — when used by others: see e.g. the references in n. 10. And it could have been used by Domitian in jest, and twisted against him posthumously. But canny Augustus, who had no desire to be assassinated, in the Senate House or in his bedroom, had been better at political presentation and 'public relations'. Not all Caesars succeeded in the rodeo act of, as Tiberius put it, riding the tiger.

⁽⁹⁾ W. BARCLAY, *The Revelation of John* (Edinburgh 1956) I, 14-20; cp. R. SCHÜTZ, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes u. Kaiser Domitian* (Göttingen 1933) 67. Barclay confuses several issues. Pliny (letters 10,96) had confronted Christians with *simulacra numinum* and Trajan's *imago*. When alive and in power, Domitian had enjoyed being the blood relation of two gods. But he had not become one himself. Like Gaius and Nero, he had not been deified. Like Gaius and Galba, he had been assassinated. It is a moot point whether he had incurred official *damnatio memoriae*. But his name had been glaringly deleted from many an inscription (of which some survive). His 'images', his statues had been thrown down (Pliny, *Panegyric* 52). His policies and 'acta', unlike those of nearly all previous emperors, were not automatically binding on his successors. Nerva or Trajan could confirm this or that Domitianic decision, or could adopt similar policies, and take credit for them as their own. But if one thing is clear from the famous exchange of letters between Pliny and Trajan, it is that Pliny was asking about, and Trajan was implementing, a long-settled policy (to my mind, a neat by-product of Vespasian's Jewish tax). Had the policy been Trajan's own, Pliny would have known about it, or Trajan would have explained it more fully. One would need harder evidence, and a clearer understanding of the basic distinction between local or provincial initiatives and central policy or responses than is found in, e.g. Barclay, to show that Domitian's ham-handedness is relevant to Rev 13,11-17.

an enthusiastic cult of Roma, coupled with the (to a monotheist, blasphemously named) Augustus, or with 'the Augusti' past and present, in Asia and Bithynia, since soon after Actium⁽¹⁰⁾. Rev 13,11-18 and 20,4 suit, well enough, the provincial and local civic pressures that are likely to have existed for Jews and Christians, in some of the '500' cities of Asia, near the end of Nero's reign. A Judaeen revolt was in progress. Any annual governor of Asia, fresh from Rome, would have intervened to protect Asia's Jews. But not, after what Caesar had done, Asia's Christians⁽¹¹⁾.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Roma as a coin symbol, with Phrygian helmet, see e.g. C. H. V. SUTHERLAND, *Roman Coins* (London 1974, illustrated) 48-53 and the many index references to Roma in E. A. SYDENHAM, *Roman Republican Coinage* (London 1952). The first Asian temple to Roma was erected at Smyrna in 195 BC. Soon after Actium we find eastern temples of, and containing statues of, Roma and the divine Julius, Roma and the 'genius' of Octavian, Roma and Augustus; permission was granted by Octavian in 29 BC (Dio 51,20,6) to the provinces of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples (a) at Ephesus and Nicaea for joint Roman worship of Roma and the deified Julius (b) at Pergamum and Nicomedia for Greek worship of Roma and in effect himself. Not much later, a temple was built at Athens to Roma and the saviour Augustus (H. KOESTER, *Introduction to the New Testament* [ET; Philadelphia 1982] I, 368, ΡΩΜΗC ΚΑΙ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ, Of Rome And Augustus The Saviour). At Caesarea, statues of Augustus and Roma (ναὸς Καίσαρος, κολοσσὸς Καίσαρος, Πώμης δὲ ἴσος, shrine of Caesar, a large statue of Caesar and one of Roma, Josephus, *War* 1,414). PRICE, *Rituals and Power*, 58, says that priests of Augustus can be traced in some 34 cities of Asia Minor; priests of Tiberius in some 11 cities, of the (unspecified) autokrator in 6 cities, and of the Sebastoi (past and present) in some 80 cities. One could go on and on; but just look at the language of some of the documents in D. C. BRAUND's conveniently translated *Sourcebook for Roman History 31BC-AD68* (Sydney and Beckenham 1985) e.g. 117, 122 (the birthday of the god), 125 (O divinity of Caesar Augustus), 127 (despite the disclaimer by Tiberius), 134, 136, 142, 145, 149, 160, 229, 235, 250, 259, 261 (statues of Nero Zeus the Liberator and the goddess Augusta Messalina), 281, 282, 284, 565, 571 (our God Caesar, despite the disclaimer by him), 572, 579 (hymning the Augustan house), 586. Not all of this language necessarily and literally meant, to its polytheist users, as much as a monotheist might think it said (cp. F. MILLAR, *The Emperor in the Roman World, 31BC-AD337* [London 1977] 611, note 2). But it meant enough, and had enough cultic implications (same note), to worry monotheists.

⁽¹¹⁾ 500 cities of Asia; plausibly put into the mouth of Agrippa II, by Josephus (*War* 2.366). The privileges of Jews would have been meaningless (E. M. SMALLWOOD, *Jews under Roman Rule* [Leiden 1976; P1981] 137) unless they included exemption from emperor-worship; but are known to

II. The Authority of Irenaeus

Yarbro Collins accepts the usual Domitianic date⁽¹²⁾. She is careful not to rely wholly on 'external evidence'. But she appears to share a traditional assumption that there is some. The dating opinions of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus, Eusebius and Jerome are held to have evidential quality. As she puts

have been often and in many places unpopular with polytheist neighbours (SMALLWOOD, *Jews*, Chap. 6; E. SCHÜRER, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, [rev. G. VERMES and F. MILLAR] [Edinburgh] I [1973] 304; II [1979] 34). Rome had to repress or protect (not just tolerate) Judaism. During the Judaeen revolt millions of Jews of the Dispersion remained loyal to Rome. Even so their position was bound to be more difficult than usual, *vis-à-vis* some of their neighbours; and the unpopular Jewish exemption, from a cult that in civic terms was probably difficult to evade without popular obloquy, was likely to be challenged afresh, in many places if not everywhere. M. GOODMAN, "Nerva, the *Fiscus Judaicus* and Jewish Identity", *JRS* 79 (1989) 40-44, makes the interesting suggestion that Jews, including Jewish as opposed to Christian proselytes, were in effect exempted by Nerva from emperor-worship, if they were willing to pay Vespasian's Jewish tax. That if so came later. But Agrippa II, according to Josephus, had sensibly warned the would-be rebels that "every city [in the world] will run with Jewish blood"; not least, presumably, in the many cities of Asia (*War* 2,398-9; 366). Josephus duly describes one or two of the worst riots that did occur, in major cities. Roman governors presumably upheld the privileges of Jews during the revolt; provided that they reaffirmed their basic loyalty to Rome, and did so with sufficient fervour. But imagine the probable civic pressures on Asia's Christians, during the Judaeen revolt and in the aftermath of the Neronian persecution, when their previous *de facto* exemption from emperor-worship, as a Jewish sect, was no longer likely to be upheld by some new Roman governor, coming out from Rome for a year in office. Rev's horror of the cult, and indeed its hostile attitude to the irredeemably wicked human race, is easy to explain if the early part of the revolt had unleashed much goading by Gentile mobs of their Christian neighbours at the times of relevant provincial and local city festivals, and if it was rightly or wrongly supposed that Christian victims, on that awful day (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15,44) in Rome, had been jeeringly invited to save their skins by kowtowing to the double-chinned young Caesar (who was present, dressed as a charioteer). The future author of John could have gone from Judaea, during the revolt, to Ephesus, after the persecution. He could have been brought before a new governor of Asia, in say AD 67, and consigned to Patmos.

(¹²) *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London 1989) 998. See also her "Dating the Apocalypse of John", *BibRes* 26 (1981) 33-45; and n.23 below.

it, "these comments by ancient writers consitute external evidence for the date" of Rev. Yet the post-Irenaeus ancient writers took, or may well have taken, their cue from Irenaeus (the Eusebius passage quotes Irenaeus and is our best authority for what Irenaeus wrote). And Irenaeus was writing in Gaul, during the AD 180s or late AD 170s, about when an apocalyptic vision had been seen in Patmos by a disciple called John⁽¹³⁾. He thinks that John saw it 80-95 sketchily charted years earlier — in other words 35 sketchily charted years, or so, before he (Irenaeus) was born. We would not normally regard so distant, belated and second-hand an opinion as, by itself, evidence. And it is particularly far from constituting a complete and normal ex-current standard date, duly and fully noted and recorded at the time⁽¹⁴⁾. As a date, it is incomplete, retrospective, very non-standard. Such dates are in no way self-authenticating. They always were and still are low-grade factual opinions about what was then a chronologically almost uncharted past. They need to be attested by other evidence; not 'accepted' if and because they seem plausible⁽¹⁵⁾.

Such opinions in Irenaeus are not, to my mind, necessarily false — or true. He presumably said what he had heard, at Smyrna in his boyhood, in (say) AD c. 140. And one can for instance note

(13) *Adv. Haer.* Pref. 3; 1,13,7; 3,3,3. Could Irenaeus know how many years ago the end of the reign of D. had been? He could — by the usable but erratic old method of trying to learn and add up the approximate reign-lengths of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, assuming that he was writing in the reign of Commodus and knew that he had himself been born in the reign of Hadrian. See also B. NEWMAN, "The Fallacy of the Domitian Hypothesis. Critique of the Irenaeus Source as a Witness for the Contemporary-Historical Approach to the Interpretation of the Apocalypse", *NTS* 10 (1962) 133-139.

(14) Dates are like one's personal spending accounts. Standard dates were 'done' when they were easy to do — at the time. Non-standard dates were not 'done' at the time; though, if one leaves them undone, they soon become, first difficult, then — save with undeserved luck, or a disproportionate expenditure of effort — impossible. We constantly underestimate the difficulty of early historic non-standard dates.

(15) YARBRO COLLINS, *New Jerome*, 998-999, regards the use of 'Babylon' for Rome as post-AD 70. But it could just as well be post-persecution and post-revolt. J. P. M. SWEET, *Revelation* (Philadelphia 1979) 27, weighs the apparent evidence with care. But he does not in my view notice the real textual and contextual evidence. Like others, he also treats a supposedly "firm tradition stemming from Irenaeus" as dating evidence.

Hengel's presentation of other evidence that a Judaeon John the Elder (not John the Galilean apostle) died under Trajan; and probably wrote, late in life, the Johannine works⁽¹⁶⁾. Such things could have been widely and articulately noted at the relevant time or times; and could therefore have become 'good' tradition. But Irenaeus could have been misinformed about the timing of long-past events; including the genesis of the other long NT work (Rev) which he attributes to the same John. The dates which he gives, for Rev and the synoptic gospels, are later opinions rather than evidence⁽¹⁷⁾. When wrong but plausible, such opinions become legends. For us to 'accept' them — especially if, at the same time, we feel bound to reject what the same writer says about who wrote the works — is to ignore the special and characteristic insecurity of ancient and retrospective opinions about the order of past events, some 1300 years before the AD numbering of current years became a familiar and general practice in England⁽¹⁸⁾. To regard such opinions as being somehow (like most public or duly published modern dates) secure data is to my mind an anachronism. It risks leaping to conclusions that are conjectural, chronologically 'preposterous' — and quite possibly foreshortened⁽¹⁹⁾.

(16) HENGEL, *The Johannine Question*, *passim*. Hengel shows, among other things, that Papias, an ex-pupil of the Elder, draws on oral Johannine tradition. The fourth gospel cannot therefore be as early as Robinson and others maintain.

(17) A fundamental general distinction in thought about the past.

(18) AD (AI, Annus ab Incarnatione) year-numbering was first used (by Dionysius Exiguus, 95 times, in column 1 of a table of 95 future Easters) in AD 525. But it took roughly 1000 years to come into general current dating use. In England — where Bede had first devised a few past AD dates, and one BC date, in AD c. 734 — one need only compare the (at best reign-dated) Cy 15 Paston letters with the Cy 16 Lisle letters.

(19) Or of course stretched out. But foreshortening was a real enough risk, as is evident if one recalls how Archbishop Ussher (AD 1581-1666) dated the Creation. Even today our memories can easily merge. They can focus, when merged, on the stronger or more recent of two similar memories. They can thereby become foreshortened. For instance I am happy to own and use the late Betty RADICE's *Who's Who in the Ancient World* (London 1971 etc). But she (very occasionally) nods. She says that Tiberius "was in retirement at Rhodes, after an early successful military career, when he was recalled to become emperor at the age of fifty-six". He in fact returned from Rhodes in AD 2, and became once more a kind of deputy and heir to Augustus in AD 4; twelve and ten years earlier,

On such premises, less evidential weight attaches to what Irenaeus says about the date, than to what he says about who wrote John — and Rev. Suppose the same non-apostle wrote or was in some sense behind two such superficially different works. Rev would then surely have to be much the earlier and less mature of the two⁽²⁰⁾. But in any case we have perhaps tended to ignore or underestimate the steadily narrowing effect of plentiful and coherent textual and contextual evidence, for the earlier dating of most if not all of Rev.

III. Babylon, Jerusalem and Rome

A preliminary tripwire: some say that the 'Babylon' of Rev is Jerusalem, or the institutional Church⁽²¹⁾. The identification with early imperial Rome is probably right. But it needs to be thought about, and argued; especially as Jerusalem too had at least seven hills. Jerusalem was no longer ruled by kings; and, if Rev was written after AD 70, had spectacularly fallen. The 'Babylon' of Rev is a city that is about to fall, but has not yet fallen. It is ruled by (as the monarchical east saw it) kings⁽²²⁾. It is, by analogy with Daniel,

respectively. Note also the telltale minor mistake of ignoring the days and months and assuming a year O; thereby adding 42 & 14, to make T. 56 when A. died. T. was born on 16th November 42 BC. A. died on 19th August AD 14, before T's 55th birthday. Chronologically 'preposterous'? By having sorted the past into a wrong order, with the pre post, the early later, the before after.

⁽²⁰⁾ John is written in simple but correct (or corrected) Greek, with a limited vocabulary. Rev is written, presumably without help, in bad Greek. ROBINSON, *Redating*, 222!

⁽²¹⁾ J. M. FORD, *Revelation* (New York 1975), was not the first to suggest that 'Babylon' is Jerusalem. For instance W. MILLIGAN, *Lectures on the Apocalypse* (London 1892) argued that 'Babylon' is Jerusalem rather than Rome, but Jerusalem in a very special sense, as typifying the degenerate earthly Church.

⁽²²⁾ It is tempting but wrong to count the 'kings' of 'Babylon' in 17,9 (as many have done) from Augustus through Tiberius. Augustus successfully presented himself, in the west, as the first Princeps. This is an ultra-eastern document, as its curious Greek and its knowledge of the OT declare; its point of view is eastern rather than western. It is less tempting but just as wrong to count the 'kings' from Julius Caesar through Augustus and Tiberius. Julius Caesar fell, Augustus and Tiberius did not.

which the author of Rev knew well, an armed and dominant power, akin to ancient Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Macedonia. Rome had taken control of much of the known world, including Judaea. 'Babylon' could in such circumstances be, and would on the whole appear to be, a simple codeword for early imperial Rome.

In Rev wicked 'Babylon' is excitedly expected to fall; and almighty God intends, thus, to punish it for its wickedness (e.g. 19,1-2). This is surely much the most helpful and most objective dating clue — if 'Babylon' means early imperial Rome. It relates to a large and reasonably well-dated collective entity. For Rome was already a famous city with a million or so inhabitants, an ancient empire with more than fifty million subjects, an extremely public 'thing' (*res publica*) personified as Roma. And her (Roma's) supposedly imminent fall is the subject, not of this or that verse, but of more than two chapters (16,17–18,24) of Rev. They are central and climactic chapters. This is shown by the prophetic genre, and by the cumulatively patterned imagery of many preceding chapters⁽²³⁾.

Roma's supposedly imminent fall points us to a year of crisis: AD 69. Tacitus pictured AD 69, in his *Dialogus* (purportedly written under Vespasian), as "that long and single year of Galba, Otho and Vitellius"; and summed it up, in his *Histories* (written AD c. 106-9) as "nearly Rome's last"⁽²⁴⁾. Nothing of the kind had happened in the preceding 100 years; since the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC and the ensuing long-drawn-out civil wars which, for practical purposes, ended in 31 BC at Actium. The next crisis hardly counted. Domitian fell, the elderly Nerva soon died; and 2 Esdras, written AD c. 100, may have hoped that Trajan would soon die⁽²⁵⁾. Rome was at risk of falling in a second year of four emperors (AD 193); and often during Cy 3. But it recovered under Diocletian, and did not

The count is therefore of Caesars — inevitably including, in the crucial year, Galba, Otho and Vitellius — who have literally fallen or are about to fall bloodily, as Rome too is about to fall. (Claudius was probably poisoned. But such rumours were not encouraged by Agrippina or Nero. Officially C. died in his bed at age 63. And he, unlike Tiberius, Gaius, Nero, Galba, Otho and Vitellius, was deified.)

⁽²³⁾ YARBRO COLLINS, "Oppression from Without; the Symbolisation of Rome as Evil in Early Christianity", *Concilium* 200 (1988) 66-74.

⁽²⁴⁾ Tacitus, *Dial.* 17 (illum... longum et unum annum), *Hist.* 1,11 ad fin (annum rei publicae prope supremum).

⁽²⁵⁾ 2 Esdras 12,10-28, cp. 3,1.

then fall until AD 410. Rev was deservedly the least popular of the NT writings, despite its laudable aim of comforting and encouraging persecuted Christians⁽²⁶⁾. Perhaps it survives largely because, in Cy 3, its main secular message became less seldom topical: Caesars were falling in droves.

On 8th June AD 68 Nero was deposed and declared a public enemy. On the following day he committed suicide. His fall was epoch-making; it ended a dynasty. But it did not by itself make the fall of Rome seem imminent. A Caesar (Nero) had fallen, another Caesar (Galba) had taken over. But by mid-April AD 69 Galba and Otho had both fallen⁽²⁷⁾. The number of sensationally fallen Caesars, the ones who had fallen famously and bloodily, by assassination or suicide, thus rose to five (Julius Caesar, Gaius, Nero, Galba, Otho). And the gaps between falls were becoming excitingly shorter. There had been nearly 84 years between the falls of Julius Caesar and Gaius. There had been more than 27 years between the falls of Gaius and Nero. There had been about 7 months between the falls of Nero and Galba. There had been 3 months, 2 of them in the usual off-season for fighting, between the falls of Galba and Otho. Of the five fallen Caesars, three had fallen within 12 months. Vitellius was son of a famous governor of Syria. But how many months, or days, could this new 'king' last, with God so clearly against him⁽²⁸⁾?

A Spanish legion put Galba into power. As Tacitus puts it, "a secret of empire was thus bruited abroad — emperors can be made elsewhere than in Rome"⁽²⁹⁾. In Rome the highly-paid Praetorian Guard (a force by then equivalent to two legions) put Otho into power having, for a blatantly mercenary reason, deserted their emperor and assassinated their consuls. Two Roman armies (seven

⁽²⁶⁾ NESTLE-ALAND, *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁶, Introd. 16, 53.

⁽²⁷⁾ For the sake of brevity I attest almost none of the plentiful secular material here used, about AD 69. It is well-established, and can mainly be found in usable parts of the *Histories* of Tacitus and the relevant Suetonius *Lives*. See WELLESLEY, *Long Year*.

⁽²⁸⁾ SWEET, *Revelation*, 259, cp. 21: "not meant to tell the hearers who is reigning — they know". But when they heard it read, the situation had changed; the 'king' who 'is' was dead, the 'other' had come, etc. The falls were surely intended as evidence of the imminent fall of Rome itself, in AD 69.

⁽²⁹⁾ *Hist.* 1.4, evulgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri.

legions) in the provinces of Lower and Upper Germany, with a legion from Gaul, and with help from a three-legion Roman army in Britain, put Vitellius into power. He reached Rome in June AD 69.

A week or so later, on 1st July, a comparatively poor and low-born senator called Titus Flavius Vespasianus was acclaimed emperor by a Roman army of two legions at Alexandria. A few days later, he was acclaimed by his own Roman army of three legions in Judaea. A few days later still, he was acclaimed by a Roman army of (then) three legions in Syria. Soon three more Roman armies, of six legions, created a kind of giant Severn-ripple of acclamation, up the Danube. In seemingly less than no time Vespasian had been acclaimed by 14 legions in 6 armies, one army after the other, in rapid anti-clockwise succession (SE, ESE, E, N, NNE) round Patmos. How many armies did Rome have? About ten (17,12); depending on how, in a small place like Patmos, and with a mind full of OT imagery, one chose to count them. There were Roman armies at Rome and in Britain, Lower Germany, Upper Germany, Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia, Syria, Judaea, Egypt. There were odd legions elsewhere; in remote Gaul, Spain, Africa. But they were currently quiescent — or cowed.

A 'showdown' between Vitellius and Vespasian seemed imminent. Mucianus, the new king-maker, was marching from Syria to Italy. Antonius Primus was racing for Rome, via Cremona, from the Danube. Vespasian was still in the east. There were rumours, perhaps of Greek origin, that Nero, the carefully-wooed liberator of Greece in AD 67, was alive and would return from the far non-Roman east⁽³⁰⁾. There were rumours, perhaps of Jewish origin, that Parthia's famous horsemen were about to invade⁽³¹⁾.

The uninhibited main vision of Rev is, by NT standards, curiously lacking in any of the usual sad signs of current animosity

⁽³⁰⁾ Freeing of Greece; a long announcement, dated to what we call 28th Nov. AD 67, and probably drafted by Nero himself, after being allowed to win all the first prizes, see E. M. SMALLWOOD, *Documents of the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge 1967; Bristol 1983) No. 64 p.35. See n. 7.

⁽³¹⁾ *Hist.* 1.2. Due forethought, about what the Parthians (Rev 16,12; 9,14-16, and perhaps 6,1-2) might do, was one of many good reasons why Vespasian chose to stay in the east for the time being. And Parthia had many Jews; who had (like the many Jews of the Roman Empire) been expected by the Zealots (Josephus, *War* 1,5) to intervene and save Jerusalem.

between Jews and Christians. When was such a lack least unlikely? There were four years during which such animosity could have been largely buried — by common animosity towards Rome. Jerusalem had rebelled in AD 66; and had not yet fallen⁽³²⁾. We know what happened to Jerusalem. But men and women, then alive, did not know; any more than we know what will happen next year. Rome was on the verge of falling. Five of its 'kings' had fallen. Two more of them (Tweedledum and Tweedledee, 'the one' and 'the other') were about to clash. But the God of Israel was in charge. Neither contender was likely to survive for long.

Rev's stern theology of punishment is hard to distinguish from a raw, hate-filled and indiscriminate human longing for vengeance. Rev is blazingly angry with 'Babylon' for shedding the blood of many Christians⁽³³⁾. There had been a brutal mass execution of Rome's Christians. News of that unexpected spectacle, staged in the symbolic presence of Caesar himself, was still raw in Christian memories⁽³⁴⁾.

The Neronian persecution is nearly always too narrowly dated: AD 64. It could have been in AD 65 or 66⁽³⁵⁾. It could have been on

⁽³²⁾ The Temple of God (plus altar) can still be measured; and the number of worshippers counted (11,1). And a tenth of the city will fall (11,13). There are therefore, in Rev as in Acts, two great cities: Jerusalem as well as 'Babylon'. Jerusalem is presumably expected to fall too. But it will, unlike Rome, be splendidly raised. (These references are often dismissed as inconclusive. They are indeed, by themselves.)

⁽³³⁾ The Christian victims are not always (Rev 6,9; 13,7; 19,1-2) clearly distinguished from earlier martyrs and other victims, including Jewish ones. But they stand before the Lamb (7,9). Their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (7,14). They were our brothers, accused by a power that is about to be overthrown. They conquered him by the sacrifice of the Lamb, and by the testimony which they uttered (12,11). They were beheaded, having refused to worship the Beast (20,4).

⁽³⁴⁾ The account given by Tacitus (*Ann.* 15,44) is horrifying enough; when one considers that what was done was staged as a public spectacle, in the symbolic presence of Caesar (it apparently sickened the spectators, by no means a squeamish assembly). The probable short-term deterrent and shock, when such news had been spread and exaggerated to eastern Christians by bush telegraph, are hard to over-estimate. Tienanmen-style state terror often 'works' — in the shorter run.

⁽³⁵⁾ SWEET, *Revelation*, 22, following ROBINSON, *Redating*, 145ff, dates it early in AD 65. But the persecution had happened under Nero, who was present in person; and presumably after the fire, for which the Christians had reportedly been blamed. We know, from an entry for 25th September AD 66

the traditional day, 29th June, not long after the Judaeian revolt of (?) May AD 66, and less than three and a half years before the time at which I am suggesting that Rev was conceived⁽³⁶⁾. Christians saw

in the *Acta Fratrum Arvalium*, that Nero had just left for Greece; SMALLWOOD, *Documents*, 26. He stayed in Greece for a most unwisely prolonged holiday. I cannot see that the persecution happened between his return from Greece (at the very end of November AD 67), and his fall in June AD 68. But that would be better attested, by the quite detailed and (to the eye of one who worked as an administrator) highly time-consuming sequences of events that are given in *Ann.* 15,38-44, than a date in the last five months of AD 64. ROBINSON, *Redating*, 146, argued that, the later the date of the persecution, the less plausible would have been the idea of blaming the Christians. But was it, at the time, plausible? We read that the victims were pitied; hardly a sign of mob anger by half a million homeless. The persistent rumour that Nero started it, or had it restarted when it began to die down, was presumably part of the persistent upper-class infighting against Nero.

⁽³⁶⁾ The traditional day and month of the Neronian persecution, 29th June, are weakly attested; ROBINSON, *Redating*, 143. But they should not have been swept aside as absurd; least of all, on the too usual ground (itself, in retrospect, amusingly irrelevant) that the fire only started on 19th July. The Julian calendar had been in operation for more than a century. And its days and months — which we still use, in simpler modern words — had been far from new, when Julius Caesar introduced his bold and basically lasting solar calendar (in 46/5 BC). The month and day of what was done to Rome's Christians would therefore have been, unlike the year, known to many thousands at the time. I can think of nothing more ordinary or natural than that the Roman month and day should have been noted at the time, repeated, recognised, remembered, mourned, commemorated by many a bereaved Roman family; just as the Ides of March were remembered (and as e.g. 14th July is remembered in France). It was Rome's clumsily distinguished years, not Rome's already time-hallowed months and days, that obliged the ordinary inhabitants of Cy 1 Rome to manage, somehow, in a fog of — so far as past years were concerned — near-total datelessness. Judaea revolted “in the 12th year of Nero's reign and the 17th of Agrippa's [note the double reign date], in the month of Artemisios” (Josephus, *War* 2,284). The 12th year of Nero ran from 13th October AD 65. Artemisios is usually (and not unreasonably) taken to be May; though, as the table in E. J. BICKERMAN, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (London ²1980) 48, graphically shows, that depends on which ancient annual calendar, with what New Year, Josephus had in mind — and on whether the calendar in question was already Julian in type, or, if not, had had enough months intercalated recently. Our author clearly took his insistent 42 months or roughly 1260 days (11,2; 11,3; 12,6; 12,14; 13,5) from Daniel. But that in no way precludes a recent and familiar abomination from which to reckon them, and one that could still become apparent if Rev can at last be firmly dated by (of course) other evidence.

themselves, during the next 250 years, as loyal Roman subjects — and as saints, followers of a risen Lord. But the initial persecution is likely, when exaggerated by bush telegraph, to have come as a shock. The victims in Rev say a most unsaintly prayer, that their blood shall be avenged on the inhabitants of the whole earth (6,10). The heavenly host are an unredeemed mob howling for a holocaust; wholesale vengeance on an irredeemably wicked human race (19,1-2).

Rev is angry about a woman (17,3) mounted on a scarlet beast. I agree with Yarbro Collins that she sounds like the minor goddess Roma⁽³⁷⁾. Roma, with her Phrygian helmet, had been a Britannia-like coin symbol, on coins of the expanding Roman city-state republic. She was spontaneously worshipped, with her deified dead emperors, but above all with the 'genius' of the current emperor, by the Greeks who were culturally dominant in Asia and Bithynia⁽³⁸⁾. It was presumably those Greeks, not the emperor or some Roman governor, who gleefully put pressure on Jews and Christians to join the loyal fun, and contribute modestly towards its cost. Rev is angry, not only with Rome but with the human race; including a second beast (13,11) which came up out of the earth (not the sea), and enforces worship (for a monotheist, blasphemous) of the image of the Beast. That second beast sounds like the Greek κοινὸν Ἀσίας, the *commune Asiae*, mercilessly goading Christians, under Nero, during the Judaeen revolt and in the aftermath of the persecution, to demonstrate their solidarity, with the local Greek community, and their vaunted loyalty, to Caesar⁽³⁹⁾.

IV. The Internal Evidence

'Internal' (i.e. textual) dating evidence tends to be ambiguous. Few of these possible indicators tell us much, if we look at them in isolation. But they are cumulative. They begin to add up. They reveal an inadvertently precise and coherent chronological pattern — once one notices the fleeting but famous, complex and unique

⁽³⁷⁾ *New Jerome*, 1012.

⁽³⁸⁾ See notes 8 to 11.

⁽³⁹⁾ The purely local civic mob pressures could however have been just as frightening. See the end of n.11 on how 'John' could have been consigned to Patmos by a provincial governor of Asia (on assize, not necessarily at Ephesus?) under Nero.

historical crisis and context within which they do so. Loisy thought that "men have taxed their wits to find in [Rev] a meaning which is not there, for the simple reason that the meaning which is there was immediately contradicted by the course of events" (40). At the time when Rev was conceived, and when all or most of it was written, that sensational meaning had not yet been contradicted. A (presumably) eminent and (palpably) very Jewish Christian, sent to Patmos from the mainland for being a prominent Christian, could confidently suppose — and hope, as teenager polytheists like Tacitus could fear — that imperial Rome, not Jerusalem, was on the verge of falling, by divine will/wills (41).

The textual indicators in Rev are, as in Daniel, inadvertent, of different kinds, and numerous. They can be fitted (and stitched, as if with a surgical needle and thread, over and over again) into a series of contextual indicators. In the present case that series is ideally famous, tightly packed, precisely and securely dated. It is a short but dense pattern of public sensational widely-known events, for which complete dates were noted and recorded at the time. Such dates are therefore standard dates, ex-current dates. Much of what I have been saying was — during, and only during, the months in question — major true exciting widely-reported current oral news. We too have had an autumn like that in 1989.

Some of the oral detail would have got lost, or badly garbled, *en route* to Patmos from e.g. Rome via Miletus, Cremona via Miletus, Alexandria via Miletus, Antioch via Miletus and the Danube area via Miletus. The — by then presumably exaggerated — residual gist would have taken months, rather than weeks or days, to be brought to Patmos, in several instalments, by the usual media; excitedly chattering boat-borne bush-telegraph 'angels' (42). Enough of it to cause the strange but discernible mental mixture which we have in Rev is unlikely to have reached Patmos, and there to have induced a vivid and oddly 'spiralling' dream on a Saturday night (which would have counted, to 'John', as part of the Sunday), before October (43).

(40) A. LOISY, *The Origins of the New Testament* (ET; London 1950) 11.

(41) HENGEL, *The Johannine Question*, 124-126.

(42) Angels, as in Greek tragedies, the bearers of oral news. See n. 6.

(43) In some ways like a dream: F.C. BURKITT, *EnchBrit*, 1955 edn, article on Rev. Days that begin in the evening, a vestigial relic of the Babylonian luni-solar calendar.

But the flashpoint-news, whatever it was, is also unlikely to have reached so small and isolated an island during the winter, or later than about mid-November.

Rev, if thus conceived, still needed to be written. By ancient standards it is a quite long and complex document, produced in (academically) less than ideal circumstances. Rich men had private libraries, and there were public libraries in the larger cities⁽⁴⁴⁾. But one cannot imagine many large scrolls, or any research facilities, in small barren remote thinly populated ancient Patmos. I have never thought it plausible that the (presumably exiled) author of Rev could consult written sources, rather than tap lively personal memories of hearing them read elsewhere⁽⁴⁵⁾. Even so, the complex main vision of Rev could easily have taken weeks (or a month, or more) to emerge, at Patmos, in more or less the form in which we have it, on papyrus surreptitiously obtained from Miletus.

A Domitianic or post-Domitianic author of Rev might or might not have gone to the bother of antedating it — as e.g. H. B. Swete suggested⁽⁴⁶⁾ — by the pseudo-antique evocation of some (by then) singularly unobvious traces of an almost forgotten moment in past time. But suppose he did. As John Sweet points out, he did not claim a more prestigious personal pseudonym⁽⁴⁷⁾. And he would surely not have chosen to commend old-seeming prophecies by including, and flaunting, past hot tips that had gone wrong. The Parthians had not invaded, in time to save Jerusalem. Rome had not fallen. Vespasian had come. Vespasian had lasted. Vespasian had been, as e.g. 2 Esdras is aware⁽⁴⁸⁾, an effective and major emperor.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Men like Cicero and the Plinies had private libraries, complete with slaves called 'librarii' and supervising 'scribae'; *Oxf. Class. Dict.*, "libraries", 'scribae'. Public libraries were available in many cities; and KOESTER, *Introduction*, I, 92, has, as a nice illustration, a notice from outside the library of Pantaenus in Athens.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ SWEET, *Revelation*, 39; "he never quotes a passage verbatim".

⁽⁴⁶⁾ See n. 3.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ SWEET, *Revelation*, 37: "no capital is made of the fictitious attribution". But no attribution was needed if John was presenting his own earlier vision of, as he saw it, someone he knew, in its clumsier Greek.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ See n. 24.

V. The Letters to Seven Churches

I do not claim that Rev, as we have it, was wholly written during the winter of AD 69. For a puzzle remains about the quasi-letters to seven churches (chapters 2 and 3). Charles dated them earlier than the main vision; because they do not yet talk about the kind of emperor-worship which (in his view) first became a major threat to Christians under and because of Domitian⁽⁴⁹⁾. Hengel thinks they could have been re-worked, later, by a pupil of the late Elder, early in the reign of Trajan⁽⁵⁰⁾. Robinson saw no good reason to suppose that they were written later⁽⁵¹⁾. For Hemer they suit but do not require a Domitianic date⁽⁵²⁾.

The quasi-letters are written in the same curious Greek as the rest. And their imagery is neatly integrated into that of the main vision. But the John who wrote 1,9 was no longer in Patmos. Ἐγενόμην, I was. He had been (willy-nilly?) in Patmos. But when he wrote the quasi-letters, he was less excited. He had had time to become well-known to (and to know much about) the seven churches. He was aware of current tension between Jews and Christians in Smyrna and Philadelphia (2,9; 3,9). He could have felt called, in old age, to lecture one or two of the churches, tactfully and briefly but bluntly and with the highest authority. (Suppose Irenaeus was right about who wrote John *and* Rev. The writer could then conceivably, in his teens, have been a young disciple. Had he perhaps been at the Supper with Jesus, at the foot of the Cross with Mary, at the Tomb with Peter?)

He could have remembered his relatively youthful and hitherto unused draft. He could have used it, almost as it stood; by rewording chapter 1, and updating what if anything he had originally felt called to say to the seven churches⁽⁵³⁾. A contemporary pretext, if he felt that he needed one, might have been early Trajanic gossip,

⁽⁴⁹⁾ CHARLES, *Revelation*, I, XCI-XCVII.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ HENDEL, *The Johannine Question*, 81.

⁽⁵¹⁾ ROBINSON, *Redating*, 226-230.

⁽⁵²⁾ C. J. HEMER, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, in their Local Setting* (Sheffield 1986) 3-4.

⁽⁵³⁾ Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives* 42, has a long and interesting story about the author (John the Apostle, but it could have begun as a story about the Elder?) on return from Patmos.

caused by a further fall (Domitian's) in AD 96, soon followed by Nerva's death.

So late a date for the quasi-letters is to my mind less securely attested than an early date for the main vision; John could have written his covering chapters much earlier (conceivably — e.g. if he was released, with other victims of a fallen and discredited dynasty, by the first Flavian governor of Asia — in AD 70). But an early Trajanic date would have the merit of explaining what Irenaeus was presumably told, at Smyrna, more than a generation later. If the vision was first shared with the seven churches at about the turn of the century, one or two of its first hearers (a young couple who later became his grandparents?) may not have realised that it had been conceived so long ago.

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SOMMAIRE

C'est par une méthode textuelle et contextuelle qu'il a été possible de redacter le livre de Daniel. La même méthode peut être appliquée à l'Apocalypse. Cet écrit aurait circulé parmi les « Sept Églises » après la date traditionnelle de sa composition (fin du règne de Domitien), c'est-à-dire après la chute de Domitien (septembre 96 P.C.N.) et la mort rapide de Nerva (janvier 98 P.C.N.). Mais Ap a dû être conçue à Patmos au cours d'une année toute particulière (69 P.C.N.) en réponse aux événements. Elle a été rédigée pour la majeure part durant cet hiver, avant que d'autres nouvelles n'atteignent Patmos. Plus d'un indice pointe dans cette direction, surtout le fait que Roma elle-même semble sur le point de tomber.

ANIMADVERSIONES

“Frau Weisheit” in Koh 7,26

Bitterer als der Tod ist das Weib; sie ist ein Fangnetz, ihr Herz ist ein Garn, und ihre Hände sind Fesseln. Wer Gott gefällt, der entrinnt ihr; wer aber sündigt, wird von ihr gefangen ... unter tausend habe ich wohl einen Mann gefunden, aber ein Weib unter diesen allen fand ich nicht.

Mit diesen Aussagen in Koh 7,26.28b (zitiert nach der Übersetzung der *Zürcher Bibel* [Revision 1931]) scheint sich Kohelet als Frauenfeind zu entlarven: “Der geläufige Topos der Schulweisheit, die männliche Jugend vor Verführerinnen zu warnen, hat sich bei Kohelet zum Verdacht gegen das ganze weibliche Geschlecht ausgeweitet. Die Frau an sich im kategorialen Sinne ist gefährlich”⁽¹⁾. Mit einem derart “pessimistischen Bild[] von der Frau”⁽²⁾ befände sich Kohelet im Rahmen frühjüdischer Weisheit⁽³⁾ wie frühhellenistischer Philosophie⁽⁴⁾ durchaus in prominenter Gesellschaft. Doch zeigt sich bei näherer Betrachtung des Textes und seiner Diskussion in der Forschung, daß diese Interpretation von Koh 7,26.28b keineswegs unproblematisch ist.

Stutzig macht bereits, daß es wenig später im Kohelet-Buch heißt: “Genieße dein Leben mit einer Frau, die du liebst, alle Tage deines flüchtigen Lebens ...!” (9,9). Zweifellos ist auch dieser Aufruf “ganz aus der Perspektive des Mannes heraus formuliert”, nennt er doch die Frau “in einer Reihe mit guten Speisen und süßem Wein, mit frischer Wäsche und duften-

⁽¹⁾ A. LAUHA, *Kohelet* (BKAT 19; Neukirchen 1978) 144f.

⁽²⁾ H.-P. MÜLLER, “Neige der althebräischen ‘Weisheit’; Zum Denken Qohäläts”, *ZAW* 90 (1978) 238-264: 252.

⁽³⁾ Vgl. nur Sir 25,24: “Von einer Frau stammt der Anfang der Schuld, und ihretwegen sterben wir alle” und 42,13f.: “Denn von einem Kleid geht aus eine Motte, und von einer Frau die Bösartigkeit einer anderen Frau. Besser ist die Schlechtigkeit eines Mannes als die Freundlichkeit einer Frau, und eine Tochter bereitet mehr Schrecken als alle Schmach” (Übersetzung: G. SAUER, *Jesus Sirach* [Ben Sira] (*JSHRZ* III/5; Gütersloh 1981); s. dazu P. W. SKEHAN – A. A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York 1987) 90ff. (Lit.).

⁽⁴⁾ “Als der Philosoph Diogenes einst gefragt wurde, was im Leben das Schlimmste sei, antwortete er: ‘Eine gut aussehende Frau’. Einmal erblickte er Frauen, die an einem Baum erhängt worden waren. Da rief er aus: ‘O wenn doch alle Bäume solche Frucht trügen!’ Von schönen Hetären sagte er, sie seien einem tödlichen Honigtrunk vergleichbar” (N. LOHFINK, “War Kohelet ein Frauenfeind? Ein Versuch, die Logik und den Gegenstand von Koh., 7,23–8,1 herauszufinden”, *La Sagesse de l’Ancien Testament* (ed. M. GILBERT) (BETL 51; Leuven 1979) 259-287: 259 [mit Quellenangaben]). Vgl. auch R. BRAUN, *Kohelet und die frühhellenistische Populärphilosophie* (BZAW 130; Berlin 1973) 70f. Anm. 180.

dem Haaröl”⁽⁵⁾. Doch gehört die Frau nach Koh 9,7-10 im Gegensatz zu 7,26 immerhin eindeutig auf die angenehmere Seite des menschlichen Lebens (das in der patriarchalischen Perspektive des Textes mit dem männlichen Leben gleichgesetzt werden kann) — es sei denn, man nimmt an, “daß dort die Frauenliebe zu den trügerischen Eitelkeiten des Lebens gehört”, die mit der bitteren “Ironie” des Pessimisten angepriesen werden⁽⁶⁾.

Aber schon die Formulierung von 7,26 selbst ist keineswegs eindeutig. Die Partikel אשר, die den einleitenden Satz אשר את האשה mit weiteren Aussagen über “die Frau” verbindet, kann nämlich sowohl explikativ als auch restriktiv verstanden werden⁽⁷⁾. Im ersten Fall würde die Behauptung, die Frau sei bitterer als der Tod, durch die folgenden Aussagen näher erläutert (“das heißt...”) oder begründet (“denn...”). Im zweiten Fall dagegen würde sie auf eine Teilklasse von Frauen eingeschränkt: “Bitterer als der Tod ist die(jenige) Frau, welche” die im folgenden genannten Eigenschaften aufweist. In diesem Sinne wird Koh 7,26 z.B. in der *Luther-Übersetzung* (Revision 1964) interpretiert: “Und ich fand, bitterer als der Tod sei ein Weib, das ein Fangnetz ist...” Dann läge hier keine generell frauenfeindliche Äußerung vor, sondern eine Aussage, die dem traditionell-weisheitlichen Topos der Warnung vor der “fremden Frau” entspricht. Sie wird im Sprüche- und im Sirach-Buch mehrfach in Koh 7,26 vergleichbarer Weise dargestellt⁽⁸⁾. Aber auch eine Deutung des Verses auf “Frau Torheit” (vgl. Spr 9,13ff.), wie sie bereits in den griechischen Übersetzungen entwickelt wird, wäre unter Voraussetzung dieses einschränkenden Verständnisses von V. 26 nicht von vorneherein auszuschließen⁽⁹⁾.

Als “Beweis dafür, daß sich das Urteil Kohelets” in V. 26 “auf das ganze weibliche Geschlecht bezieht und nicht nur auf verführerische Frauen”⁽¹⁰⁾, wird häufig V. 28b betrachtet: “Einen Menschen (bzw. Mann) aus tausend habe ich gefunden, aber eine Frau habe ich bei all denen nicht gefunden”. Dabei wird dann vorausgesetzt, daß die Ausdrücke אדם und אשה hier “einen guten Menschen (bzw. Mann)” und “eine gute Frau” o.ä. bezeichnen⁽¹¹⁾. So paraphrasiert z.B. K. Galling⁽¹²⁾: “Unter Tausend gibt es vielleicht einen Menschen, wie er sein sollte, aber das ist kein Weib”. Eine derartige Qualifikation von אדם und אשה spricht der Text

⁽⁵⁾ LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 260.

⁽⁶⁾ So LAUHA, *Kohelet*, 141, vgl. 169.

⁽⁷⁾ Vgl. LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 264f.; D. MICHEL, *Untersuchungen zur Eigenart des Buches Qohelet* (BZAW 183; Berlin – New York 1989) 213ff.

⁽⁸⁾ Zu Koh 7,26a vgl. Spr 5,4.5.22; 6,25; 7,22f.27; Sir 26,22; zu V. 26b vgl. Sir 26,3.23; Spr 22,14; 23,27. S. weiter O. LORETZ, *Qohelet und der Alte Orient; Untersuchungen zu Stil und theologischer Thematik des Buches Qohelet* (Freiburg 1964) 115ff., 205.

⁽⁹⁾ Vgl. LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 261f. und A. ALLGEIER, *Das Buch des Predigers oder Koheleth* (HSAT 6/2; Bonn 1925) z.St. Wenig wahrscheinlich erscheint mir dagegen die Interpretation “der Frau” als “a figure of premature death” bei G. OGDEN, *Qoheleth* (Readings; Sheffield 1987) z.St.

⁽¹⁰⁾ LAUHA, *Kohelet*, 142.

⁽¹¹⁾ S. M. V. FOX, *Qohelet and His Contradictions* (JSOTSS 71 – Bible and Literature Series 18; Sheffield 1989) z.St.

⁽¹²⁾ *Der Prediger* (HAT I/18; Tübingen 21969) z.St.

freilich nicht aus⁽¹³⁾. Doch findet sich der Ausdruck “einer aus tausend” in Sir 6,5 als Bezeichnung für einen guten Freund: “Die, die du grüßt, mögen zahlreich sein, aber der Partner deiner Beratung sei einer von tausend” (Übs. G. Sauer). Von daher könnte man mit D. Michel⁽¹⁴⁾ Koh 7,28b als Aussage über den “wahren Freund” verstehen: “einen Menschen unter Tausend findet man (sc. als wahren Freund), aber eine Frau kommt dafür nicht in Frage”. Allerdings würde V.28b als “Beweis” für V.26 im Sinne einer generellen Abwertung “der Frau” diese doch zugleich auch relativieren: Männer sind gerade ein Promille “besser” als Frauen⁽¹⁵⁾! Gleichwohl formuliert V.28b im Blick auf die Frau eindeutig “allgemein und grundsätzlich”⁽¹⁶⁾. Das scheint gegen ein Verständnis von V.26 als Aussage über eine bestimmte Teilklassse “der Frau(en)” zu sprechen⁽¹⁷⁾.

Zur weiteren Klärung der Aussagen über die (bzw. eine) “Frau” in V.26 und 28b muß aber ihr Kontext in die Betrachtung mit einbezogen werden: In welcher Beziehung stehen die beiden Aussagen hier zueinander und zu den weiteren Aussagen des Textes? Der Abschnitt 7,23-29 bildet eine relativ abgegrenzte argumentative Einheit. Sie wird zusammengehalten durch die wiederkehrenden Stichwörter “Weisheit” und “Erkenntnis”, “suchen” und “finden”⁽¹⁸⁾. Sie deuten bereits das Thema des Abschnitts an: die Suche nach “Weisheit” und “Erkenntnis”. Damit hebt sich 7,23-29 thematisch vom weiteren Kontext ab: In 7,15-22 geht es um den Zusammenhang von Haltung und Schicksal des “Weisen” und des “Gerechten”, in 8,1-9 um die Stellung des “Weisen” gegenüber dem “König”. Die drei Einheiten stehen aber nicht zusammenhanglos nebeneinander. Besonders 7,23-24 und 8,1[a] lassen die enge Verbindung im Übergang zwischen den Einheiten erkennen⁽¹⁹⁾.

⁽¹³⁾ So mit Recht LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”; 280. Vgl. dagegen Spr 20,6b (ואיש חיל מי ימצא אשה) 31,10a (אמונים מי ימצא).

⁽¹⁴⁾ Untersuchungen, 231.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Vgl. R. GORDIS, *Koheleth – The Man and His World* (TSJSTA 19; New York 31968) z.St. und J. L. CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes* (OTL; Philadelphia 1987) z.St.

⁽¹⁶⁾ LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 265.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Während es bei den Männern wenigstens “einen aus tausend” — welcher Qualität auch immer — gibt, gibt es keine derartige Frau. Von daher wird man kaum sagen können, daß V.28b den Unterschied zwischen Mann und Frau völlig nivelliert, wie R. N. WHYBRAY, *Ecclesiastes* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids–London 1989) z.St. meint; “The meaning is that the speaker has ‘found’ virtually no person, whether man or woman, who corresponds to whatever he has been looking for”.

⁽¹⁸⁾ חכמה: V.23 [+ חכם] 25; חשבון: V.25.27.29 [pl.]; בקש pi.: V.25.28.29; מציא: V.26.27 [2x].28 [3x].29. Weitere wiederholte Stichworte bzw. Wendungen sind: האלהים: V.26.29; אדם[ה]: V.28.29; אשה[ה]: V.26.28 und ראה זה: V.27.29.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Der Übergangs- und Verbindungscharakter von 7,23f. und 8,1[a] spiegelt sich wider in den unterschiedlichen Abgrenzungen, wie sie die Kommentare vornehmen. So betrachtet etwa W. ZIMMERLI, *Prediger* (ATD 16/1; Göttingen 31980) 7,23f. als selbständige Einheit neben V.25-29; R. E. MURPHY, *Wisdom Literature* (FOTL 13; Grand Rapids 1981) grenzt 7,15-24 und 25-29 als Einheiten ab; CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes*, nimmt 7,23-29 zusammen; N. LOHFINK, *Kohelet* (NEB; Würzburg 21980) und FOX, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, nehmen noch 8,1a, GALLING, *Der Prediger*; J. A. LOADER, *Ecclesiastes* (Text and Interpretation; Grand Rapids 1986) und WHYBRAY, *Ecclesiastes*, 8,1 [a + b] hinzu.

23 Das alles habe ich erprobt mit der WEISHEIT: Ich habe gesagt: Ich will weise sein! Aber sie war fern von mir. 24 Fern ist, was es gegeben hat, und tief, tief — wer könnte es *finden*?

25 Ich habe mich <mit>⁽²⁰⁾ meinem Verstand umgewandt, um WEISHEIT UND ERKENNTNIS zu verstehen und zu erforschen und (zu) *suchen*, und zu verstehen, daß Unrecht Dummheit ist und Torheit Verblendung.

26 Und ich *finde*, daß DIE FRAU bitterer ist als der Tod⁽²¹⁾: Sie ist Fangseile, ihr Herz (bzw. Verstand) Schleppnetze, ihre Hände Fesseln⁽²²⁾. Einer, der gut ist vor Gott (= wer Glück hat⁽²³⁾?), wird vor ihr gerettet; aber ein Sünder (= wer Pech hat?) wird von ihr gefangen.

27 Sieh, das habe ich *gefunden*, <hat der Kohelet gesagt>⁽²⁴⁾: Alles in allem⁽²⁵⁾ ist eine ERKENNTNIS zu *finden*⁽²⁶⁾: 28a Ich selbst habe dauernd *gesucht*, aber *nicht gefunden*!

28b Einen (einzigen) MENSCHEN (bzw. MANN) aus tausend habe ich *gefunden*, aber eine FRAU habe ich bei all denen *nicht gefunden*.

29 Allein, sieh, das habe ich *gefunden*: Der Gott hat den (bzw. die) MENSCHEN recht gemacht, aber sie *suchen* viele (bzw. große) ERKENNTNISSE.

Die in der Übersetzung hervorgehobenen Stichworte lassen erkennen, daß die Aussagen über (Mann und) Frau in V. 26 und 28b mit dem Kontext in V. 23-29 eng verwoben sind. Die argumentative Struktur des Textes erschließt sich m.E., wenn man davon ausgeht, daß er eine subtile und differenzierte Auseinandersetzung mit traditional vorgegebenen Konzepten von “Weisheit” führt. Für den gesamten Abschnitt bestimmend ist die Auseinandersetzung mit der Ansicht, “die Weisheit” sei für jeden, der sie auf richtig “sucht”, zu “finden”⁽²⁷⁾. Sie wird in Koh 7,23-29 nicht einfach

⁽²⁰⁾ Mit zahlreichen Mss. dürfte hier בלבי statt ולבי zu lesen sein (s. BHS).

⁽²¹⁾ Zur Konstruktion vgl. LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 278, Anm. 66.

⁽²²⁾ Möglich wäre es auch, היא als *casus pendens* zu interpretieren und zu übersetzen: “Fangseile und Schleppnetze ist ihr Herz (bzw. Verstand), Fesseln sind ihre Hände” (so M); vgl. LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 278, Anm. 67.

⁽²³⁾ Zur Möglichkeit eines “nicht-religiösen” und “moralfreien” Verständnisses der Ausdrücke טוב לפני האלהים und טוב חוטא vgl. BRAUN, *Kohelet*, 53; H.-P. MÜLLER, “Theonome Skepsis und Lebensfreude; Zu Koh 1,12–3,15”, *BZ* (NF) 30 (1986) 1-19: 12 (zu Koh 2,26); LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 279, Anm. 69 sowie GORDIS, *Koheleth*, 87ff.

⁽²⁴⁾ Statt אברה קהלת dürfte אמר הקהלת zu lesen sein; vgl. G und Koh 12,8 (s. BHK; BHS).

⁽²⁵⁾ Vgl. GB s.v. אחד 5. KBL (s.v. אחד 2) schlägt für אחת לאחת die Übersetzung “eins ums andere” vor.

⁽²⁶⁾ Üblicherweise wird V.27b als “an adverbial accusative of manner” zu V. 27aa interpretiert (CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes*, z.St. mit Hinweis auf GK §118q); vgl. z.B. ZIMMERLI, *Prediger*: “als ich eines um das andere prüfte [Anm.: “Man wird die elliptische Aussage des M etwa so zu ergänzen haben.”], um zu einem Ergebnis zu kommen”.

⁽²⁷⁾ Vgl. etwa Sir 51,26: “Nahe (קרובה) ist sie [die Weisheit] denen, die sie suchen (למבקשה), und wer sich ihr hingibt, wird sie finden (מצא)” (Übs. G. SAUER); vgl. weiter Spr 2,4f.; Sir 4,12f.; 6,27; 51,13ff. 26f. sowie Spr 8,17; 14,6.

bestritten, sondern differenziert diskutiert⁽²⁸⁾: Kohelet hat einiges "gefunden"⁽²⁹⁾, anderes dagegen "nicht gefunden"⁽³⁰⁾. Dabei kommen verschiedene Aspekte traditionaler "Weisheits"-Konzepte in den Blick.

V. 23 formuliert "a semantic paradox"⁽³¹⁾: Kohelet bedient sich der Weisheit als Instrument⁽³²⁾ seiner Untersuchung (כל זה נסיתי בחכמה), muß dann aber im Zuge der Untersuchung feststellen, daß ihm die vermeintlich zu seiner Verfügung stehende Weisheit "fern" ist. V. 24 setzt das "Fern-Sein" der "Weisheit" in Parallele zum "Fern-Sein" vergangener Ereignisse ("was es gegeben hat"), die vom Menschen nur begrenzt "gefunden" werden können. Dabei verweist V. 24 deutlich zurück auf die grundlegenden Ausführungen in Koh 1,9-11 (מה שהיה) und 3,11 (מצא). Im Rückgriff auf die dort entwickelte erkenntnis-kritische Argumentation wird hier also offenbar die Zugänglichkeit einer "Weisheit" bestritten, für die die Bezugnahme auf Vergangenheit konstitutiv ist (vgl. 8,16f.). Ein entsprechendes, traditions-orientiertes Weisheits-Konzept wird im zeitgenössischen Umfeld des Kohelet-Buchs greifbar bei Sirach: Nach Sir 39,1 "erforscht" der Weise "die Weisheit aller Vorfahren", und Sir 44ff. führt das Programm eines "Lernens aus der Geschichte" breit angelegt aus⁽³³⁾.

V. 25 leitet eine "Wendung" (סבב) der Untersuchung ein. War "die Weisheit" in V. 23f. in erster Linie *Instrument* der Untersuchungen Kohelets (wobei sie freilich implizit auch selbst "erprobt" wurde), wird sie nun zu deren *Gegenstand*⁽³⁴⁾. Zugleich kommt in V. 25 ein neuer Aspekt von "Weisheit" in den Blick. Für diesen scheint weniger die Verbindung von "Weisheit und Erkenntnis" (חכמה וחשבון) charakteristisch zu sein als die

⁽²⁸⁾ Vgl. die den Text bestimmenden Stichwörter "suchen" (בקש pi.; bzw. "erproben" [נסה pi.], "verstehen" [ידע], "erforschen" [תיר] und "finden" (מצא), im Sinne von "herausfinden", "begreifen", "erkennen"; vgl. A. CERESKO, "The Function of *Antanaclassis* מצא 'to find' // מצא 'to reach, overtake, grasp' in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth", *CBQ* 44 [1982] 551-569).

⁽²⁹⁾ V. 26: ומצא אני; V. 27.28ba.29: מצאתי; vgl. V. 27: למצא חשבון.

⁽³⁰⁾ V. 28a,bß: מצאתי; vgl. V. 24: מי ימצאו.

⁽³¹⁾ M. V. FOX-B. PORTEN, "Unsought Discoveries: Qohelet 7:23-8:1a", *Hebrew Studies* 19 (1978) 26-38 (anders FOX, *Qohelet*, z.St!).

⁽³²⁾ Vgl. zu instrumentalem כ nach נסה pi. Ri 6,39; Koh 2,1 (s. KBL s.v. נסה pi. 2).

⁽³³⁾ In Sir 4,15-19 findet sich eine Darstellung des "Bildungs-Prozesses", die ein genaues Gegenbild zu Koh 7,23f. darstellt: "15 Wer auf mich [die Weisheit] hört, wird gerecht richten, und wer aufmerkt auf mich, wird in meinen Kammern lagern. 16 Denn indem ich mich fremd stelle, wandle ich mit ihm. 17 Anfangs prüfe ich ihn mit Versuchungen (נסיות); danach wird angefüllt werden sein Herz (bzw. Verstand) von mir. 18 Ich werde ihn wieder glücklich wandeln lassen und ihm meine Geheimnisse offenbaren. 19 Wenn er abweicht, verstoße ich ihn ..." (Übersetzung nach G. SAUER). Im Gegensatz zu Koh 7,23f. ist die Weisheit hier nicht Mittel oder Gegenstand, sondern Subjekt der "Erprobung" und des gesamten Bildungs-Prozesses (V. 17). Im Zuge dieses Prozesses erweist sich hier nicht die vermeintlich nahe Weisheit als "fern", sondern die vermeintlich "fremde" Weisheit als nahe (V. 16). Vgl. auch die Stichwörter בקש und מצא im Kontext (Sir 4,12f.). "Fern" (רחוק) ist die Weisheit nach Sir 15,8 "von den Spöttern"; dagegen ist sie nach Sir 51,26 "nahe (קרובה) denen, die sie suchen (למבקשיה), und wer sich ihr hingibt, findet sie (מוצא)".

⁽³⁴⁾ Vgl. ähnliche Wendungen der Untersuchung in 1,13.17 und 2,3.12a. In der Formulierung von 7,25 klingen insbesondere 1,13a und 1,17a an.

Identifikation von “Unrecht” (רשע) mit “Dummheit” (כסל) (und “Torheit” (סכלות) mit “Verblendung” (הוללות)⁽³⁵⁾. Sie macht es wahrscheinlich, daß hier “Thesen der weisheitlichen Tradition angezielt [sind], die die weisheitliche Bildung als Weg zur moralischen Perfektion behaupten”⁽³⁶⁾. Programmatisch wird ein derartiges Weisheits-Konzept z.B. in der Zweckbestimmung der “Sprüche Salomos” formuliert: “um Weisheit und Zucht zu erkennen (לדעת חכמה ומוסר), um Worte der Einsicht zu vermehren, um verständig machende Zucht anzunehmen, Gerechtigkeit und Recht und Geradheit (צדק ומשפט ומשרים)” (Spr 1,2f.)⁽³⁷⁾.

Die in V. 25 angekündigte “Suche” führt zu verschiedenen Ergebnissen, die in V. 26.27-28a.28b und 29 jeweils mit dem Stichwort “finden” bzw. “nicht finden” vorgestellt werden. Hier bezieht sich der abschließende V. 29 deutlich auf V. 25 zurück: Wenn Gott den Menschen “recht” (ישר) gemacht hat, ist dessen Suche (בקש pi.) nach “großen (bzw. vielen) Erkenntnissen” (חשבות רבים) jedenfalls keine Voraussetzung für “moralische Perfektion”⁽³⁸⁾. Der Anklang an die negative Beurteilung der *מחשבת* des menschlichen Verstandes in Gen 6,5⁽³⁹⁾ legt eher die gegenteilige Annahme nahe. Damit wird aber die Gegenüberstellung von “Weisheit und Erkenntnis” einerseits und “Unrecht” = “Dummheit” andererseits in V. 25 (mindestens) fragwürdig.

V. 27-28a verweist über V. 25 (Stichwörter *חשבון* und *בקש pi.*) hinaus auf V. 23f. zurück: Wie die dort durchgeführte Untersuchung *mit* “der Weisheit” führt auch die in V. 25 angekündigte Suche *nach* “Weisheit und Erkenntnis” zu einem negativen Ergebnis: “Ich selbst habe dauernd gesucht, aber nicht gefunden” (V. 28a). Das ist nun freilich andererseits durchaus eine “Erkenntnis”, die sich “finden” läßt (*למצא חשבון*, V. 27) — allerdings eine in höchstem Maße erkenntnis-kritische Erkenntnis, die dem sokratischen “Ich weiß, daß ich nichts weiß”⁽⁴⁰⁾ nicht nachsteht.

Wie fügen sich nun die Aussagen über (Mann und) Frau in V. 26 und 28b in diesen argumentativen Zusammenhang? Zunächst wäre es möglich, die Aussagen über “die Frau” in V. 26 als Beispiel für eine “Erkenntnis” zu verstehen, die Kohelet bei seiner Suche nach “Weisheit und Erkenntnis” (V. 25) “gefunden” hat. In der Auswahl dieses Beispiels könnte dann “die bittere Ironie über das erbärmliche Ergebnis der Nachforschungen zum Ausdruck” kommen⁽⁴¹⁾. Die Pointe von V. 26 im Kontext könnte

⁽³⁵⁾ Vgl. dazu T. DONALD, “The Semantic Field of ‘Folly’ in Proverbs, Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes”, *VT* 13 (1963) 285-292: 289.

⁽³⁶⁾ LOHFINK, “Frauenfeind”, 275, Anm. 53.

⁽³⁷⁾ Übersetzung A. MEINHOLD, *Die Sprüche; Teil 1: Sprüche Kapitel 1-15* (ZBK 16.1; Zürich 1991).

⁽³⁸⁾ S. zum vorwiegend ethisch-qualifizierenden Gebrauch von *ישר* im AT G. LIEDKE, *THAT I*, 791ff.

⁽³⁹⁾ Vgl. WHYBRAY, *Ecclesiastes*, z.St. W. SCHOTTRUFF, *THAT I*, 645f. macht auf mögliche pejorative Konnotationen der von *חשב* gebildeten Nomina im AT aufmerksam.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Vgl. dazu G. BÖHME, *Der Typ Sokrates* (Frankfurt a.M. 1988) 117ff.

⁽⁴¹⁾ LAUHA, *Kohelet* (zu V. 25); vgl. FOX, *Qohelet*, z.St.: “There is bathos in these words: the result of his search in the lofty realms of intellect is just this: a woman is dangerous”.

aber auch in der zweiten Vershälfte gesehen werden: Wenn es allein Sache des göttlichen Wohlwollens oder des Glücks ist, ob ein Mann den Gefahren der (bzw. einer Teilklasse von) Frauen erliegt oder nicht⁽⁴²⁾, ist das Konzept der "Weisheit" als "Weg zur moralischen Perfektion" (vgl. V. 25) fragwürdig.

Gegen die Annahme, V. 26 formuliere eine "Erkenntnis", die Kohelet "gefunden" hat, und der er zustimmt, spricht freilich, daß der unmittelbar folgende V. 27 als einzige "Erkenntnis" Kohelets festhält, daß er "dauernd gesucht, aber *nicht* gefunden" hat. N. Lohfink, K. Baltzer und D. Michel verstehen deshalb V. 26-29 in dem Sinne, daß in V. 26 eine misogynie Aussage "zitiert" und im Fortgang des Textes kritisch "kommentiert" wird. Dabei vertreten sie allerdings recht unterschiedliche Abgrenzungen und Interpretationen von "Zitat" und "Kommentar" im Text. Darin deuten sich bereits die Probleme dieses Interpretations-Ansatzes an.

N. Lohfink⁽⁴³⁾ geht davon aus, daß in V. 26 מֵר מָוֹת "*stärker als der Tod*" bedeutet: Die Behauptung, die Frau sei stärker als der Tod (V. 26), wird von Kohelet durch "induktive" Überprüfung (V. 27) widerlegt: auch Frauen sind sterblich (V. 28)! V. 29 formuliert dann seinerseits einen kritischen Kommentar zur soeben vorgeführten "induktiven" Methode: "Der Induktion gelingt es zwar, die Frau zu entmystifizieren und damit auch den Mann aus der Belagerung durch die Frau zu befreien. Aber eben die Methode, mit der die Menschen sich befreien, ermöglicht die Technik des Kriegs, und genau dafür verwenden die Menschen sie"⁽⁴⁴⁾. — Das Problem dieser Interpretation liegt (neben der Übersetzung von מֵר in V. 26⁽⁴⁵⁾ und חֲשׁוֹנָה in V. 29⁽⁴⁶⁾) v.a. in Lohfinks Deutung von V. 28b, den er folgendermaßen paraphrasiert: "*Von tausend Menschen (die ich beobachtend ins Auge faßte) habe ich (nach einer gewissen Zeit) nur noch einen einzigen wiedergefunden (alle anderen hatte der Tod schon dahingerafft) — und es war nicht eine Frau, die ich aus all diesen wiedergefunden habe*"⁽⁴⁷⁾. Alles, was Lohfink in Klammern ergänzt, ist für sein Verständnis von V. 28b entscheidend — und im Text gerade nicht gesagt! Zudem bleibt unerfindlich, warum der einzige Mensch, der von tausend nach einer gewissen Zeit noch am Leben ist, ausgerechnet ein Mann sein soll.

⁽⁴²⁾ Vgl. WHYBRAY, *Ecclesiastes*, z.St.: "it is only God who can protect men from her temptations, and — as stated again in 2:26, where the terms *he who pleases God* and *sinner* are used — his reasons for doing so or refraining from doing so are hidden".

⁽⁴³⁾ LOHFINK, "Frauenfeind", 278ff.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ LOHFINK, "Frauenfeind", 286f.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Vgl. dazu bereits M. DAHOOD, "Qohelet and Recent Discoveries", *Bib* 39 (1958) 302-318: 308ff.; C. F. WHITLEY, *Koheleth; His Language and Thought* (BZAW 148; Berlin 1979) 68f.; zur Kritik s. FOX, *Qohelet*, z.St. mit Hinweis auf D. PARDEE, "The Semitic Root *mrr* and the Etymology of Ugaritic *mr(r)* // *brk*", *UF* 10 (1978) 249-288: 257ff.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ S. LOHFINK, "Frauenfeind", 284ff.; vgl. K. BALTZER, "Women and War in Qohelet 7:23-8:1a", *HTR* 80 (1987) 127-132: 131; 2Chr 26,15; dagegen MICHEL, *Untersuchungen*, 232ff.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ LOHFINK, "Frauenfeind", 281.

K. Baltzer schließt sich in der Abgrenzung von “Zitat” (V.26[a]) und “Kommentar” (V.27-29) i.W. Lohfink an, interpretiert aber den “Kommentar” in anderer Weise: S.E. ist אלף in V.28b militärischer Terminus (“Tausende”)⁽⁴⁸⁾, sodaß die Pointe dieser Aussage darin läge, daß sich beim Militär ausschließlich Männer (אדם), aber keine Frauen finden. Damit wäre V.26 als Behauptung der “Lebens-Gefährlichkeit” der Frau in der Tat durch den Hinweis auf die “Realität” widerlegt, in der es die Männer sind, die Kriegsdienst leisten (V.28b) und “engines of war” (חשכנות: V.29b) erfinden. V.29 wäre nach Baltzer “a sort of prooftext”, der mit Anspielung auf Gen 1f.; 6,5; 8,21 den Kommentar zu V.26 in V.27f. unterstützt⁽⁴⁹⁾. — Baltzers Interpretation des Textes entgeht den Schwierigkeiten, die sich bei Lohfink zeigten. Problematisch erscheint freilich das — für diese Interpretation entscheidende! — Verständnis von אדם אחר in V.28b als “ausschließlich Männer”.

D. Michel⁽⁵⁰⁾ umgeht die Schwierigkeit, V.28 als “Kommentar” zum “Zitat” in V.26 interpretieren zu müssen, indem er V.28 als einen Einschub versteht, in dem V.28b — als ein zweites misogynen Zitat nach V.26 — durch V.28a zurückgewiesen wird: “Was ich übrigens noch mit Leidenschaft überprüft und nicht als bestätigt gefunden habe, ist (der Satz): ‘Einen einzigen Menschen habe ich unter tausend gefunden, aber eine Frau habe ich unter all diesen nicht gefunden’”⁽⁵¹⁾. Dabei wäre V.28b nach Michel vor dem Hintergrund von Sir 6,6 zu verstehen als Aussage über den “wahren Freund” (s.o.). Der “Kommentar” zu V.26 und 28b fände sich nach Michel in V.27 und 29: “Die sicherlich nicht ohne Ironie formulierte Kritik Qohelets läßt sich ... folgendermaßen zusammenfassen: Das Ergebnis des Überprüfens (בקש) der Weisheit in Form von חשבון ist, daß die Menschen viele חשכנות herauszufinden suchen (בקש) und dadurch ihr naturgemäßes Geradesein verdrehen”⁽⁵²⁾. — Michel gesteht freilich selbst zu, daß sich im Text keinerlei “Argumentation” gegen die von Kohelet zurückgewiesenen “Zitate” findet. Darin sieht er “die Erklärung für das singuläre אמר הקהלת” in V.27: Kohelet “beansprucht hier, mit Autorität zu reden”⁽⁵³⁾. Kann eine solche Berufung auf Autorität aber nach den selbstkritischen Reflexionen in V.23f. bei einem Leser noch verfangen?

Die Schwierigkeiten, V.26 als (generelle oder einschränkende) Aussage über “die Frau” mit dem argumentativen Zusammenhang im Kontext zu verbinden — sei es im Sinne einer von Kohelet bestätigt gefundenen oder im Sinne einer von ihm abgelehnten “Erkenntnis” —, geben Anlaß, nach weiteren Deutungsmöglichkeiten für V.26 Ausschau zu halten. Hier wäre

⁽⁴⁸⁾ BALTZER, *Women*, 130, Anm. 14 verweist auf KBL s.v. אלף III und Num 10,4; 31,5; Ri 6,15. Vgl. auch Ijob 33,23, wo מלך אלף ein “Engel” von den “Tausend” = den “himmlischen Heerscharen” ist.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ BALTZER, *Women*, 131.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ MICHEL, *Untersuchungen*, 235ff.

⁽⁵¹⁾ MICHEL, *Untersuchungen*, 238.

⁽⁵²⁾ MICHEL, *Untersuchungen*, 237.

⁽⁵³⁾ MICHEL, *Untersuchungen*, 236. Dagegen betrachtet z.B. LAUHA, *Kohelet*, z.St. <אמר הקהלת> als redaktionellen “Zusatz...”, der dem Leser gegenüber betonen will, daß die geäußerte Meinung über die Frau nur Kohelets private Sache ist.”

nun m.E. zu erwägen, ob "die Frau", von der in V. 26 die Rede ist, nicht "Frau Weisheit" sein könnte⁽⁵⁴⁾. Sie wird in Sir 6,23ff. in vergleichbarer Weise wie "die Frau" in Koh 7,26 dargestellt:

- 24 (G) Zwänge deine Füße in *ihre Fesseln* (πέδας)
und in ihr Joch deinen Hals.
23 (H) Beuge deine Schulter und trage sie,
und verabscheue nicht ihre Ratschläge ...
27 Frage und forsche, suche und finde,
und wenn du sie ergriffen hast, laß sie nicht los!
28 Denn am Ende wirst du finden die Ruhe, die sie verleiht,
und sie wird sich dir wandeln zur Freude.
29 Und es wird für dich sein *ihr Netz* (רשתה) eine starke Festung (מכון עז),
und *ihre Bande* (חבלותה) goldene Gewänder.
30 Ein Schmuck von Gold ist ihr Joch,
und *ihre Stricke* (מסרותיה) ein Purpurband.
31 Als ein Ehrengewand wirst du sie anziehen,
und als eine prächtige Krone wirst du sie tragen.

Hier wird die "pädagogisch-didaktische" Komponente des Konzepts einer personifizierten Weisheit gut erkennbar⁽⁵⁵⁾: Der Prozeß der Aneignung von Weisheit wird "erotisch" überhöht als Vorgang des "Erobert-Werdens" durch eine Frau. Die realen Zwänge, denen der Schüler durch den Lehrer im Prozeß der weisheitlichen Ausbildung unterworfen ist ("Joch", "Fesseln", "Stricke" usw.) werden damit erträglich gemacht.

Nachdem Koh 7,25 eine Suche nach "Weisheit und Erkenntnis" angekündigt hatte, läge es durchaus nahe, daß "die Frau", die er nach v. 26a "gefunden" hat, "Frau Weisheit" ist. Dann würde hier mit dem Konzept einer personifizierten Weisheit nach der Traditionsorientierung (V. 23f.) und der Identifikation von Weisheit und Moral (V. 25) ein dritter Aspekt traditionaler Weisheit kritisch in den Blick genommen. Wie in V. 23f. wird Kohelet auch hier im Umgang mit "der Weisheit" desillusioniert: "die Frau" erweist sich ihm "bitterer als der Tod".

V. 26b führt diese Kritik an einer "erotischen" Überhöhung von Weisheit und (Aus)Bildung weiter und bezieht sie zugleich auf die in V. 25b angedeutete Identifikation von Weisheit und Moral: *Wenn* "die Frau" (Weisheit) so ist, wie sie z.B. Sir 6,23ff. darstellt — nämlich eine ebenso "verführerische" Frau wie die "fremde Frau", vor der die traditionale Weisheit warnt —, *dann* ist es gerade der "Sünder", der von ihr gefangen wird!

Mit V. 27f. wird die Kritik an einer Personifizierung der Weisheit als Frau dann noch einen Schritt weiter getrieben: Nach V. 26 hat Kohelet "gefunden", daß "die Frau (Weisheit) bitterer ist als der Tod", *wenn* sie so ist, wie sie in der Tradition dargestellt wird, mit der er sich hier auseinan-

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Vgl. zur Darstellung der Weisheit als Frau in Spr 1–9 H. D. PREUB, *Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur* (Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln – Mainz 1987) 63ff. (Lit.).

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Vgl. auch MEINHOLD, *Sprüche 1–15*, 44.

dersetzt. Nach V. 27f. hat er die so geschilderte “Frau” Weisheit *selbst* nun aber gerade *nicht* gefunden, sondern nur “*einen* Mann aus tausend”. Das kann Sir 6,5 entsprechend (s.o.) ein wahrer Freund und guter Ratgeber sein — also doch wohl ein “Weiser”. Es könnte aber auch gemäß Ijob 33,23 (מלאך מליץ אחד מן אלף) ein Angehöriger der “himmlischen Heerscharen” als Übermittler von Weisheit sein⁽⁵⁶⁾. Die Pointe von V. 28b in Verbindung mit V. 26 als Aussage über “Frau Weisheit” bestünde jedenfalls darin, daß hier das Konzept einer “weiblichen” Weisheit als Ideologie entlarvt wird, die die Realitäten des weisheitlichen Bildungsbetriebs verschleierte: In Wirklichkeit begegnet man auf der Suche nach Weisheit ausschließlich Männern, aber keiner Frau (V. 27f.), auch nicht “der Frau Weisheit” (V. 26a) — zum Glück (V. 26b), handelt es sich doch bei dieser um ein fragwürdiges Produkt männlicher Phantasie (V. 29)!

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⁽⁵⁶⁾ Vgl. die Bedeutung der — durchweg männlichen! — *angeli interpretes* im Rahmen der “apokalyptischen” Weisheit (z.B. Dan; Hen)!

Strength through Wisdom and the Bee in LXX-Prov 6,8^{a-c}

Bees have symbolized organization, intelligence, and industry in a wide variety of classical literatures. Praised in such works as Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*, Vergil's *Fourth Georgic*, and Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, the wisdom of the bee is not praised in the Hebrew Bible⁽¹⁾. It is, however, in one verse in the Septuagint of Proverbs, for which there is no known Hebrew tradition. The translator notes the wisdom of the bee in the addition of 6,8^{a-c}:

6,8^{a-c}

ἢ πορεύθητι πρὸς τὴν μέλισσαν	Or go to the bee,
καὶ μάθε ὡς ἐργάτις ἐστίν	And learn how industrious she is,
τὴν τε ἐργασίαν ὡς σεμνὴν ποιεῖται,	and how seriously she performs work,
ἥς τοὺς πόνοὺς βασιλεῖς καὶ	whose products kings and
ἰδιῶται πρὸς ὑγίειαν φέρονται,	commoners use for health,
ποθεινὴ δέ ἐστιν πᾶσιν καὶ ἐπίδοξος·	She is desired by all and well-known.
καίπερ οὖσα τῇ ῥώμῃ ἀσθενής,	Though being weak physically,
τὴν σοφίαν τιμήσασα προήχθη.	By having honored wisdom she has obtained distinction.

This comparative plus in the LXX (not in the other versions) is often seen automatically as an addition in the LXX that supplements the discussion of the "ant", with no thought given to the possibility of an original reading in the *Vorlage*. Lagarde was the first to argue (instead of assume) that this passage originates with the translator, noting that the vocabulary indicates a Greek and not a Semitic origin⁽²⁾. He was followed by Baumgartner, listing the weakness of the parallelism as well as the fact that elsewhere biblically the bee is only seen as a malevolent animal⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ See M. DAVIES—J. KATHIRITHAMBY, *Greek Insects* (Oxford 1986) 47-72; and H. M. RANSOME, *The Sacred Bee in Ancient Times and Folklore* (Boston 1937).

⁽²⁾ P. DE LAGARDE, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig 1863) 22. Among other factors, the words ἐργάτις, ἰδιώτης, ποθεινός, ἐπίδοξος, and ῥώμη occur only here in translational biblical Greek (cf. G. MEZZACASA, *Il Libro dei Proverbi di Salomone* [Rome 1913] 127).

⁽³⁾ A. J. BAUMGARTNER, *Étude critique sur l'état du texte du Livre des Proverbes d'après les principales traductions anciennes* (Leipzig 1890) 68. Though he made much

However, there is more at stake than simply a gloss by the translator that supplements the commentary on the activity of the μύμηξ, “ant”, in vv. 6-8 with an illustration from another industrious insect⁽⁴⁾. Though admittedly the illustration of the ant has prompted the entrance of the illustration of the bee, the translator is not simply lengthening the lesson of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew of 6,1-11 is all about the value of present labor as realized in future returns. The addition in the LXX, on the other hand, introduces a different lesson about labor, one that has no temporal aspect but rather deals with the relationship of strength and wisdom. The comparative plus of the Septuagint here has been noted by several authors. To date, however, it has not been viewed as a part of its immediate context as well as the tendentious accentuations found in LXX Proverbs as a whole. This is the purpose of the present study.

Immediate Context

The chapter begins (vv. 1-5) with a hypothetical scenario involving three participants: the “son”, acting as co-signer on behalf of an acquaintance (the *rēa'*), has backed up a commitment made by his acquaintance to someone he (the co-signer) does not know (the *zār*, not necessarily a “foreigner”)⁽⁵⁾. The acquaintance has defaulted on his responsibility. The

of the second argument, it is certainly not inconceivable for different attributes of an animal to be used in entirely different illustrations.

⁽⁴⁾ For the “supplemental” view see C. H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh 1899) 124; and O. Plöger, *Sprüche Salomos* (BKAT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984) 64.

⁽⁵⁾ There are three interpretations of *rēa'* and *zār*. View 1: they are synonymous (Toy, *Proverbs*, 120; and J. A. Snijders, “The Meaning of *zār* in the Old Testament: An Exegetical Study”, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 10 [1954] 83-84). The synonymous view also means that *ʾrb* followed by the prefixed preposition *lamed* is synonymous to *ʾtq'* followed by *lamed*. View 2: the *rēa'* is the creditor and the *zār* is the debtor, i.e., that *ʾrb* plus *lamed* means “give surety to” (different than *ʾrb* plus accusative, “to become surety for, on behalf of”), and *ʾtq'* followed by *lamed* means “to strike an agreement for” (G. Bostrom, “Proverbiastudien: Die Weisheit und das fremde Weib in Spr. 1-9”, *Lund Universitets Årsskrift*, N.F. Avd. 1, Bd. 30, Nr. 3 (1935) 101; and W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; Philadelphia 1970) 321-322. View 3: the *rēa'* is the debtor and the *zār* is the creditor (the opposite of number 2 above), as argued above.

The problem with number 1 is that the *rēa'* is someone known either through experience or proximity, and thus cannot be a stranger. To harmonize both terms by saying that the *rēa'* and the *zār* are a fellow citizen who is outside the daily life of the guarantor, and therefore behaves like a stranger (Snijders, “The Meaning of *zār*”, 84) attributes to *rēa'* a meaning that it does not have, since it is never used of a fellow citizen who is not known in some way. Snijders claims that *ʾtq'* followed by *lamed* means “to strike hands for the sake of” (82), but outside of this verse can only base this on Job 17,3, which he translates “Put now my pledge [vocalizing *ʾerbōnī*] with you, who (else) will pledge himself in behalf of me by striking hands?” But Snijders’ claim that *ʾd* in this verse means strength or ability is awkward, since it is normally the literal hand that is struck with *ʾtq'*. It is better as “Who will shake my hand?” (M. Pope, *Job* [AB 15; Garden City, NY 1965] 127; cf. also É. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* [Trans. H. Knight; Nashville 1967] 244; and N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job* [OTL; Philadelphia 1985] 276. This rendering is more consistent the request in 3a and the sarcastic challenge to accept in 3b. Here in Prov

point of *bā'tā b^ekap-rē'ekā* (v. 3) is not that the co-signer is now indebted to the *rēa'* but rather that the life of the co-signer rests in the hand of the *rēa'*, since the *rēa'* alone has the power to remove the obligation now incumbent upon the co-signer⁽⁶⁾. The Hithpael of *rps* in v. 3 should not be taken as "trample yourself" or "let yourself be trampled" (= "humble yourself"), but rather should be allowed its meaning in Qal, "trample" (= biblical *rps*; cf. Akkadian *rapāsu*, Arabic *rafasa*, Syriac *rps*), since this is a proper parallel to the verb that immediately follows, *rhb*, whereas humbling oneself is the opposite of the sense of *rhb*. The co-signer is thus advised to "trample" and to "storm against" the *rēa'* who has betrayed the trust placed in him. Indeed, it is only worthwhile to attempt to stir the *rēa'* into action to resolve the debt, since it would be a waste of time to ask a stranger (one not known on a personal level and hence having no reason for clemency) to forgive a commitment⁽⁷⁾. But regardless of how the *rēa'* and *zār* are identified, the main point of vv. 1-5 is not that agreements of co-signature are potentially disastrous and often unwise. This is assumed to be evident to the reader here, and is in fact spelled out elsewhere in Proverbs. The point here is that, when facing personal damages from the forfeiture of the debtor, all is not lost. Instead of a resignation to present circumstances the debtor should make aggressive efforts to move the debtor into the action of fulfilling his responsibility.

In vv. 6-8 the lesson is the same, namely the value of future benefits as motivation for present labor. It is only the application that has changed. In vv. 1-5 the exertion of effort was to remove the threat of financial loss, whereas in vv. 6-8 the illustration of the ant portrays present labor as insurance against hunger. Verses 9-11 draw the lesson to a close by the directness of their homiletic warning — inactivity leads to poverty.

Within this context an addition in the LXX appears that has nothing to do with the comparison of present and future found in the Hebrew text. The addition deals with a different lesson, namely that distinction can be earned without the possession of physical prowess, that is, through industry alone.

Context of LXX Proverbs

This theme is already present in Hebrew Proverbs. Strength is certainly considered a benefit of wisdom in Proverbs, as in 8,14 where strength (*gbwrh* || ἰσχύς), among other things, is possessed by wisdom. The idea that

6,1 I propose that the *lamed* is inserted simply in order to specify the creditor in the contractual closure, that *tq't lsr kpyk* = *tq't kpyk lkpy-zr* or even *tq't kpy-zr*.

The problem with number 2 is that *'rb* plus *lamed* means "becoming surety for someone" (SNIJDERS, "The Meaning of *zār*", 82; also its sense in Aramaic, Syriac, and mishnaic Hebrew) in the same way as the more common *'rb* plus accusative.

⁽⁶⁾ SNIJDERS, "The Meaning of *zār*", 83.

⁽⁷⁾ The unforgiving nature of the *zār* is clearly the lesson of Prov 11,15. In this verse as well there is a problem with the view that the *rēa'* and the *zār* are the same person — importuning the debtor will be a wasted effort since if he does not know the person who has pledged surety he has no motivation to make good on the debt.

the strength of wisdom is equal to worldly strength is present in some measure already in the Hebrew text, as seen in verses that praise the effective influence of wisdom over obstacles typically overcome through purely physical efforts, as in 21,22, “A wise (man) scales the city of strong men, and pulls down the strength of its trust”⁽⁸⁾. In 30,24-28 praise is given to four animals for their display of practical wisdom that serves to compensate for smallness of size (in the first two a lack of strength is also mentioned). The idea that strength comes from wisdom is further found in 24,5. Though the Hebrew of this verse makes sense as it stands (cf. Caquot’s “The brave are capable thanks to strength, but a man of wisdom reinforces (his) power”)⁽⁹⁾, LXX (as well as the other versions) reads a comparative *min* in both cola: “A wise (man) is better than a strong one, and a man having understanding than a great field”. The translator read a comparative *min* in 5a⁽¹⁰⁾ and in 5b read *m’mš kh* as if it were *m’rs kh*, which defines the “strong one” (ισχυρός) as a landowner of importance. The translator apparently favored the wording of 5b, since he has imported this stich word-for-word (though perhaps into the margin, at a later point entering the text) into 16,32 (taking the reading of Alexandrinus as OG; 16,32 begins in a manner similar to 24,5 above — κρείσσων ἀνὴρ μακρόθυμος ισχυροῦ).

The concept that wisdom yields strength, strength that is even superior to that achieved through worldly means, is *accented* in LXX Proverbs. The LXX even specifically mentions strength as a result of honoring the Lord (7,1a — υἱέ, τίμα τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἰσχύσεις || > MT). This is further developed through the thought in 27,24 that there is no guarantee that *hōsen* (which the translator takes as “strength” — κράτος καὶ ἰσχύς) will last a lifetime, all the more reason to be righteous, since *hōsen rab* is said elsewhere to dwell in the house of the righteous (15,6 — again *hōsen* is understood by the translator⁽¹¹⁾ as “strength” — ἐν πλεοναζούσῃ δικαιοσύνῃ ἰσχύς πολλή).

This accentuation of strength through wisdom in LXX Proverbs is seen, however, not only in choice of vocabulary correspondents but also alterations in translation. In two instances, the translator intentionally produced renderings which promote this benefit of wisdom against readings in his *Vorlage* in which the aspect is less pronounced or even non-existent. In 17,2, where the potential of wisdom to effect a reversal of roles occurs

⁽⁸⁾ Similarly Eccl 9,13-16, in which a poor person through his wisdom proves more effective in defending a city than does the attacker by the use of brute force (though Qoheleth despairs that the poor wise person is not granted the recognition he deserves).

⁽⁹⁾ A. CAQUOT, “Israelite Perceptions of Wisdom and Strength in the Light of the Ras Shamra Texts”, *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (eds. J. G. GAMMIE, et al.) (Missoula 1978) 27.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The same idea is found in *Ps-Phoc.* 130, though using different vocabulary: “A wise man is better than a strong one” (βέλτερος ἀλκήμετος ἔφυ σοφισμένος ἀνὴρ).

⁽¹¹⁾ 15,6a-b (with obelus in SH) = OG, c-d = hexaplaric (C. T. FRITSCH, “The Treatment of the Hexaplaric Signs in the Syro-Hexaplar of Proverbs”, *JBL* 72 [1953] 175).

already in the Hebrew, the translator has reworked the verse to bring out more explicitly the teaching that wisdom can overcome established social restrictions:

17,2

οἰκέτης νοήμων κρατήσει δεσποτῶν
ἄφρόνων,
ἐν δὲ ἀδελφοῖς διελεῖται μέρη.

עבד משכיל ימשל בֶּן מְבִישׁ
וּבְתוֹךְ אֲהִים יִחַלֵּק נַחֲלָה

A sensible servant will
rule over foolish
masters,
And will divide portions
among brothers.

A sensible servant will
rule over a shameful
son,
And will divide the
inheritance among
the brothers.

In this verse the Hebrew text presents a servant who rises to the status of a free son by taking advantage of the misfortune of the real son. The servant is still, however, subordinate to the master of the estate. The translator rewrote the verse so that the servant supplants the *master* instead of just the master's son, and further that this is explicitly due to the superiority of wisdom over foolishness. The new rendering teaches therefore that no level of society is immune to the consequences of foolishness, and concurrently that wisdom can accomplish anything, even for those of low estate. Also, in the translator's version "brothers" now takes on the meaning of fellow compatriots, others who were formerly only servants but who through wisdom have overcome their low rank, or perhaps simply the lowly friends of the former servant with whom he chooses to share his newfound assets. The translator's point is that the power of the δεσπότης who ignores wisdom will be short-lived, even if the only wise person that can supplant him is a servant.

Such reworking can also be seen in 28,22:

28,22

σπεύδει πλουτεῖν ἄνθρωπος βάσκανος
καὶ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι ἐλεήμων
κρατήσει αὐτοῦ.

נִבְהַל לְהָתֵן אִישׁ רָע עֵץ
וְלֹא יָדַע כִּי חֶסֶד יָבֹאנוּ

An envious man strives
to be rich,
And does not know that
a merciful (man) will
rule over him.

A man with an evil eye
is anxious about
wealth,
And does not know that
want will come upon
him.

The translator is clearly reading a *daleth* in 22b (*hṣd*). Once this is represented by ἐλεήμων, however, *yb'nw* would produce a rendering such as "he does not know that a merciful man comes to him", which would imply that

the merciful man, presumably also poor, goes to the rich man for welfare support, but that the rich man through his greediness does not acknowledge such needs. If the translator's agenda included the doctrine that the poor (or wise, righteous, merciful), far from being at the mercy of the rich, will, through their wisdom, actually supplant them, then the insertion of κρατεῖν and the rejection of any normal correspondent for *bw'* makes sense.

In a third instance, the translator added a word into 21,22:

21,22

πόλεις ὀχυράς ἐπέβη σοφὸς
καὶ καθεῖλεν τὸ ὀχύρωμα, ἐφ' ᾧ
ἐπεποιθισαν οἱ ἄσεβεῖς

עיר גברים עלה חכם
ירד עז מבטחה

A wise (man) attacks
strong cities,
And razes the stronghold
in which the ungodly
(ones) had trusted.

A wise (man) scales the
city of strong men,
And pulls down the
strength of its
trust.

The Hebrew text contains no explicit mention of the character of the *gbrym*; instead there is the implication that their trust is in their own physical strength or the strength of their city. The translator has added οἱ ἄσεβεῖς: the wise man is not just pitted against worldly strength but specifically against the “ungodly”. This is a good example of the need in studies on LXX Proverbs to go beyond the rather obvious statement that such an addition “moralizes” the proverb. Verses such as this need to be grouped with similar phenomena in LXX Proverbs and the LXX as a whole, whether thematically or syntactically, to describe the *purpose* of the alteration. Here, for instance, this is not just a juxtaposition of the wise versus the ungodly, that is, an ethical dualism that portrays two classes of men (as well as marking one as the model for proper behavior); rather such a juxtaposition in this particular verse highlights the *interaction* between the two classes, namely that the wise man triumphs over the ungodly one.

Parallels from Hellenistic Literature

This power of wisdom (or similarly favored abstract virtues, such as righteousness) to improve social standing, and conversely the loss of status through lack of wisdom, also appears repeatedly in the book of Ben Sira⁽¹²⁾. In Sir 7,21a the master is told to love an οἰκέτης συνετός (*mśkyl*

⁽¹²⁾ Hebrew of Sira is dated to the first quarter of the second century BC (P. W. SKEHAN—A. A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* [AB 39; Garden City, NY 1987] 9-10). LXX-Proverbs has been dated anywhere from (anytime in) the second century to well into the first century BC, by various limits on both sides (e.g., Pseudo-Phocylides, dated roughly at the end of the first century BC, clearly draws from LXX-Proverbs). The Greek tradition of Sir would, of course, have a profound influence in Alexandria throughout the first century BC.

bd) as he loves himself (in 21b the master is warned against withholding freedom from the servant). Keeping in mind that in Sir the poor are often righteous/wise and the rich/rulers are often arrogant/wicked, Sir 10,14 declares that the thrones of rulers (*ἄρχοντες* || *g'ym*) are cast down by the Lord (because of their *ὑπερηφάνια*, v. 13), who sets the *πραεῖς*, “lowly”, (*hyym*) in their place. Sir 10,23-25 teaches that the person who is wise (or who fears the Lord, both qualities intertwine in the ch.), even though poor, will be honored above any ruler. Verse 25 especially declares that there should be no complaint when free men serve a wise slave (*οἰκέτη σοφῷ* [*bd msky*] *ἐλεύθεροι λειτουργήσουσιν, καὶ ἀνὴρ ἐπιστήμων οὐ γογγύσει*). In Sir 11,1 the poor person’s wisdom will set him among princes (*hkmt dl ts’ r’sw wbyn ndybyym tšybnw* || *σοφία ταπεινοῦ ἀνυψώσει κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν μέσῳ μεγιστάνων καθίσει αὐτόν*). Sir 15,5 and 20,27 contain similar comments on the ability of wisdom to advance a man’s status over those around him. The theme appears occasionally in demotic literature. *Papyrus Insinger* declares that a god “makes a poor person who begs into a master because he (the god) knows his heart” (31,17)⁽¹³⁾.

Not only is the power of wisdom praised in the *abstract* in Hellenistic literature as well as biblical Proverbs (Hebrew and, more fully, Greek), but this power is also praised in *concrete* illustrations. Whereas the Hebrew text includes such rhetorical devices such as Dame Wisdom, the addition of the bee mentioned above is the clearest example of the accenting done in LXX Proverbs to the topic of strength through wisdom. As with Hellenistic parallels to the praise given to abstract wisdom, there are extra-biblical praises given to the bee as well. Bees were praised in general for their

The provenance of LXX-Proverbs is far from firmly established. Suggestions of Palestinian provenance derive mostly from claims of Jewish pietistic Hellenizing, though I think there is much less “moralizing” (from any viewpoint) in LXX-Proverbs than is usually seen (see my forthcoming article in *JBL* — further, what “moralizing” there is shows no signs of being uniquely Palestinian). J. GAMMIE comments that the “Correspondences between Greek Proverbs and Sirach are intriguing and suggest a possible origin of the former in Palestine” (“The Septuagint of Job: Its Poetic Style and Relationship to the Septuagint of Proverbs”, *CBQ* 49 [1987] 30). But Gammie does not elaborate on the nature or number of such correspondences, and this comment is most likely an effort to bolster his case for contrast between LXX-Job and LXX-Proverbs, since he agrees with Gerleman that the provenance for LXX-Job is Alexandria and the purpose of his article is in large part to disprove Gerleman’s contention that both books come from the same translator.

Few authors openly offer a view on the provenance of LXX-Proverbs. What evidence there is for Alexandrian provenance is twofold: (1) the common use of hexameter in LXX-Proverbs (H. St. J. THACKERAY, “The Poetry of the Greek Book of Proverbs”, *JTS* 13 [1912] 46-66), which seems to indicate translational work in a city where writing Greek verse was a highly admired art and the hexameter was common (G. ZANKER repeatedly mentions the heavy influence of the hexameter in Alexandria, *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry* [London 1987]); and (2) the number of allusions to classical Greek literature in LXX-Proverbs (though Gerleman listed quite a few there are many that could be added to his list, and indeed have been in the articles and papers presented on LXX-Proverbs in the past ten years alone).

⁽¹³⁾ Demotic: *hr ir-f p’byn nt dbh hry r-qb’ rh h’ty-f*. It is understood from context that the heart of this beggar knows the greatness of the god (cf. 30,18).

wisdom throughout the Hellenistic world. In the centuries before and during the period of the formation of the Septuagint, bees are found on coins and relief sculptures as representing several virtues, bees are associated with oracles, and bees are producers of honey, thereby providing food for the gods or physical healing and prophetic powers to humans. But there are much closer parallels to LXX Proverbs 6,8^{a-c} than such general accolade, namely, commendations of the bee's skill/ability/wisdom *in spite of its physical inferiority*. In Jewish literature the bee appears in Sir 11,3: μικρὰ ἐν πετεινοῖς μέλισσα, καὶ ἀρχὴ γλυκασμάτων ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῆς, "The bee is small among flying animals, but her product is the best of sweet things" (*qṭnh b'wp dbwrh wr's tbwnwt pryh*). This verse in Sir appears within a context (10,19–11,6) that repeatedly praises the poor for their wisdom and piety and even asserts their ability to usurp the arrogant rich. Another close parallel is *Ps-Phoc.* 164-174, striking since the discussion on the industry of the bee immediately follows a discussion on the industry of the ant⁽¹⁴⁾. In demotic literature the bee appears in *Papyrus Insinger* 25,2 as part of a listing of small but significant animals and objects: "The little bee brings the honey". In classical Greek literature the ἐργασία of the bee was also praised, most notably by Aristotle in *Historia Animalium* (622B), where the treatment of the bee also immediately follows that of the ant⁽¹⁵⁾.

Conclusion

The translator, therefore, borrowed a recognized gnomic illustration in order to further not the urgency of the work ethic in the Hebrew context but rather his own association of wisdom, an invisible attribute readily available to all persons, with the visible attributes of material accumulation or social standing. There are, then, two methods to achieve fame and fortune. On the one hand disregard for righteousness or piety will often result in worldly gain. The Hebrew text affirms that the pursuit of wisdom is not to be viewed as a self-impooverishing process, but rather one that will result in equal, even greater, and more secure, advancement. The Septuagint has taken these two paths to prosperity and contrasted them to a greater extent than the Hebrew tradition, making more explicit the thought that the weak or poor wise person will actually supplant the rich yet ungodly.

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⁽¹⁴⁾ P.W. VAN DER HORST sees a dependence here of *Ps-Phoc.* on LXX-Prov 6,6-8, though I think that there is not enough evidence to pass judgment in either direction; *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha; Leiden 1978) 222-225.

⁽¹⁵⁾ This parallel was mentioned by G. GERLEMAN, "Studies in the Septuagint: III. Proverbs", *Lunds Universitets Årsskrift*, N.F., Avd. 1, Bd. 52, Nr. 3 (1956) 30-31.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Aaron SCHAT, *Mose und Israel im Konflikt*. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Wüstenerzählungen (OBO 98). Freiburg/Schweiz, Universitätsverlag – Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990. 290 p. 23,5 × 16

Das Buch enthält die überarbeitete Fassung der Dissertation, die der Verfasser im Sommersemester 1986 der Fakultät für Evangelische Theologie der Universität München vorgelegt hat. Die Arbeit versucht, auf Grund der verschiedenen Vorarbeiten die Redaktionsgeschichte der Wüstenerzählungen insgesamt zu rekonstruieren.

Angesichts der kritischen Lage der Pentateuchforschung vertritt der Verfasser die Ansicht, die historisch-kritische Methode sei nicht mehr die selbstverständliche Grundlage aller exegetischen Forschung und es beginne sich die Einsicht durchzusetzen, daß Begriffsapparat und Methoden der modernen Sprachwissenschaft für die Exegese fruchtbar gemacht werden können. So bildet ein kommunikations-theoretisches Grundmodell den Ausgangspunkt der methodologischen Überlegungen. Danach soll der Text in seiner kommunikativen Funktion und Form zwischen Autor und Leser erfaßt werden. Die Reaktion und die Erwartung des Lesers wird bei der Interpretation der Erzählungen mit berücksichtigt. Dieser Grundsatz wird aber nicht auf verschiedene literarische Schichten, sondern fast nur zur Untersuchung der Priesterschrift angewandt (64, 65, 66, 73, 75, 80, 113, 130, 132, 140 und 222).

Aus der methodologischen Diskussion werden Konsequenzen für das weitere Vorgehen gezogen: Es geht dem Verfasser um den Endtext. Dieses gilt nicht nur für den vorliegenden Pentateuch, sondern auch für die Priesterschrift und für die jehowistische Schicht. Der Endtext muß ezuerst synchron analysiert werden. Wo sich im Zuge dieses Arbeitsgangs literarische Brüche zeigen, muß auf die literarische Vorgeschichte zurückgeschlossen werden. So folgt die Literarkritik auf die Formkritik, nicht umgekehrt. Außerdem ist nach dem Verfasser die kompositionelle Gestaltung des jeweiligen Endtextes eine wesentliche Tat der Redaktoren. Schart geht darum der Redaktionsgeschichte nach, indem er die Komposition des Endtextes untersucht. Unter Komposition versteht er nicht nur die expliziten Vor- und Rückverweise, sondern auch lexikalische und thematische Berührungen zwischen einzelnen Episoden.

Nachdem die wesentlichen Probleme der gegenwärtigen Pentateuchforschung angeschnitten wurden, werden der Endtext (Kap. 3), die Priesterschrift (Kap. 4), die D-Schicht (Kap. 5) und die jehowistische Schicht (Kap. 6) behandelt.

Der Verfasser grenzt in Kap. 3 zunächst den Episodenkomplex "Wüste" im Pentateuch nach vorne sowie hinten ab und arbeitet dann die Sinai-Perikope heraus. Im Wüstenkomplex fragt er nach der thematischen Zusammengehörigkeit und nach der Struktur der Anordnung der Episoden. Er sieht im Murren des Volks ein durchgängiges Thema und versucht, eine um den Sinai und weiter jeweils in den Episoden vor und nach dem Sinai gruppierte Ringstruktur herauszuarbeiten. Der Verfasser stellt fest, daß das Murren nach dem Sinai durchgehend bestraft wird, dagegen vor dem Sinai durchgehend nicht. Er interpretiert diese Tatsache folgendermaßen: Jahwe hat sich Israel in einzigartiger Weise am Sinai bekannt gemacht, nun ist es an Israel, dem auch in seinem Verhalten ezu entsprechen.

In der Priesterschrift kommen drei Episoden in Frage (Num 13f.; 20,1-13; Ex 16). Zu jedem Abschnitt wird jeweils der gesamte Text zuerst übersetzt, dann werden die Form- und die Literarkritik durchgeführt, um die P-Schicht herauszuarbeiten. Abschließend werden ihre theologische Interpretation sowie ihr historischer Ort erörtert. Nach der Analyse der Einzeltexte werden auch hier die episodenübergreifenden Strukturen untersucht. Die Gemeinsamkeiten bis in den Wortlaut hinein, die die Episoden von P zeigen, werden als bewußte kompositionelle Gestaltung interpretiert. Zwischen Ex 16 und Num 13f. liegt allerdings eine Differenz im Verhalten Jahwes. Sie wird herkömmlich auf die unterschiedliche Form des Murrens zurückgeführt, ob es sich nämlich um einen Aufschrei aus äußerster Not handelt oder nicht. Aber der Verfasser hält das Murren in beiden Fällen für illegitim und zieht die Schlußfolgerung, daß der Sinai einen markanten Einschnitt darstellt, gerade was die Erkenntnis Jahwes betrifft. Diese Deutung von Lev 9 bleibt aber fragwürdig. Die Erkenntnis Jahwes wird nämlich in P niemals als geschehen berichtet, sondern stets als Ziel eines göttlichen Handelns angekündigt. Lev 9 berichtet nicht von der Erkenntnis, sondern vom Jubel Israels als Reaktion auf das kultische Ereignis. Kann man trotzdem aufgrund dieser Stelle den Sinai in P als Ort der Erkenntnis Jahwes interpretieren (131, 142, 145)? Auch P ist der Meinung: Mit dem Sinai ist der Zustand einer unwissenden Unschuld beendet, Israel ist nun straffähig.

Im Kap. 5 ist weder von Struktur noch von einem Einschnitt am Sinai die Rede, da es hier um eine Bearbeitungsschicht geht. Die literarischen Elemente, deren Nähe zur Formulierung des Deuteronomiums auffällt, sind teils schon vorher literarkritisch aussortiert (Num 14,11-25; Ex 16,4f.28f.), teils werden sie erst hier bestimmt (Ex 15,25b-26; 17,2.7; Num 11,11f.14-17.24b-30). Die Bearbeitung besteht in der Regel aus Redepassagen, die in den Text älterer Schichten eingefügt wurden. Aus der unterschiedlichen Vorstellung des Lexems *nsh* wird auf zwei Stufen der D-Schicht geschlossen; die Vorstellung der Wüste als Ort der Versuchung Jahwes zeige die Verwandtschaft mit Ex 32,7-14 und sei spätvorexilisch oder frühexilisch anzusetzen (die Vorkommen in Ex 17; Num 11,14). Die Vorstellung der Wüste als Ort der Erprobung Israels durch Jahwe setze P bereits voraus und sei

spätnachexilisch zu datieren (die Stellen in Ex 15; 16). Die Annahme zweier D-Schichten scheint mir möglich und sogar wahrscheinlich, da sich die Nachträge, die der dtn-dtr Tradition nahestehen, sowohl im jahwistischen (z.B. Ex 3,8) als auch im priesterschriftlichen (z.B. Ex 7,3b; 16,4f.28f.) Zusammenhang finden. Aber die Begründung mit der unterschiedlichen Bedeutung eines Wortes genügt nicht.

In der jehowistischen Schicht, die nach Abhebung der Priesterschrift und D-Schicht übrigbleibt und literargeschichtlich vor diesen Schichten einzuordnen ist, werden die fünf Episoden vor dem Sinai (Ex 15,22-25a; 17,1b.3-6; 17,8-16; 18,1-12; 18,13-27) zunächst je für sich analysiert und interpretiert, dann nach ihren kompositionellen Bezügen untereinander befragt. Zwei Paare von Episoden gruppieren sich um den Mittelpunkt Ex 17,8-16. Dieser Abschnitt habe selbst wiederum eine ringförmige Struktur. Auch im nachsinaitischen Bereich, wo die jehowistische Schicht wohl nicht mehr vollständig erhalten scheint, werden dieselben Fragen gestellt (Num 10,29-33a; 11,1-3; 11,4-35; 12; 13-14; 16). Mit Ausnahme des ersten Textes bilden die folgenden fünf Episoden wiederum eine ringförmige Struktur. Auch hier bedeutet der Sinai einen qualitativen Einschnitt im Verlauf des Geschehens; vor dem Sinai verzichtet Jahwe auf Strafe, nach dem Sinai läßt er seinem Zorn freien Lauf.

Zum Schluß werden die Ergebnisse der Einzeluntersuchungen zusammengefaßt, und die theologische Relevanz einiger Konzeptionen, die den literargeschichtlichen Werdeprozeß der Wüstenerzählungen wesentlich formiert haben, nämlich der Zeit des Übergangs, des Einschnittes des Sinaigeschehens, der Verweigerung Israels und des Mose als idealen Führers, wird kurz angedeutet.

Im Laufe der redaktionsgeschichtlichen Untersuchung werden einige der umstrittenen Probleme der Pentateuchforschung im Textbereich der Wüstenerzählungen geprüft und beurteilt: P ist keine Bearbeitungsschicht, sondern eine selbständige Schrift. E ist als Ergänzender zu J zu verstehen.

Der Verfasser sieht in der kompositionellen Gestaltung im wesentlichen Leistung der Redaktoren. Er geht, wie erwähnt, der Komposition des jeweiligen Endtextes nach, um die Redaktionsgeschichte zu ermitteln. Diese methodische Grundlage ist nicht einleuchtend. Ob die Redaktoren die Freiheit gehabt haben, die Komposition frei zu gestalten, ist doch sehr die Frage. Eher bedingt die Beschaffenheit der Vorlagen die Redaktionsarbeit. Selbst wo der Redaktor die Komposition frei gestalten kann, bleibt sie nur eine seiner Arbeitsweisen. Man kann also durch die Analyse der Struktur der vorliegenden Textgestalt allein kaum die theologische Intention der Redaktion erschließen.

Tatsächlich sind die ringförmigen Strukturen, die der Verfasser in verschiedenen Teilen des Endtextes sowie der jehowistischen Schicht wiederholt herauszuarbeiten versucht, nicht überzeugend plausibel gemacht. Die dargestellten Schemata, denen oft ein wichtiger Teil des betreffenden Textes fehlt (S.52: Ex 16; Num 13-14; S.186ff.: Ex 17,10b.11; S.224; Num 10,29-32), sind nicht aussagekräftig. Auch eine konzentrische Komposition um den Sinai herum im Endtext läßt sich nicht behaupten, denn abgesehen davon, daß der Endtext nicht nur aus den vier Episoden im Schaubild (Ex

15,22-25; 17,1-7; Num 20,1-13; 21,16-18) besteht, entsprechen sich die erste und die vierte Episode kaum, da die letzte kein Murren-Motiv kennt und zumal zwischen beiden "lexikalische Berührungen kaum greifbar sind" (43). Die Komposition der Episoden vor dem Sinai im Endtext (53ff.) ist ebenfalls unhaltbar, denn die Zusammenfassung ihres Inhalts ist zu weit hergeholt; in Ex 17,8-16 kann man kaum von der "Entdeckung" der Feindschaft gegen Amalek sprechen, die angeblich der Entdeckung des Sabbats in Ex 16,16-36 entspricht. Zudem ist zwar der Ausdruck "Gesetz und Recht" in Ex 15,25b-27 und 18,13-27 gemeinsam, aber das Thema beider Abschnitte ist unterschiedlich.

Für die Redaktionsgeschichte ist eher die Frage nach den Vorlagen grundlegend wichtig, die dem Redaktor zur Verfügung stehen. Die Unterscheidung zwischen dem vorgegebenen Stoff und dem Anteil des Redaktors ermöglicht, dessen theologische Intention herauszuarbeiten. Scharf jedoch enthält sich völlig überlieferungsgeschichtlicher Fragen (39 vgl. 12), während er sich intensiv mit der Form- und der Literarkritik beschäftigt. Der Verzicht auf die Frage nach der Vorgeschichte des vorliegenden Endtextes, sei es mündlich oder schriftlich, ist für die Arbeit charakteristisch. So wird nach der kompositionellen Struktur der jehowistischen Schicht und des Endtextes gefragt, aber weder die Redaktionsarbeit des Jehowisten noch die des Endredaktors kommt als Thema zur Sprache. Nur einmal wird es über die Umwandlung der Priesterschrift durch die Endredaktion kurz erörtert (93f.). Die redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung durch den Vergleich zwischen P und dem Endtext ist hier deswegen möglich, weil dafür kein vorgegebenes Gut rekonstruiert zu werden braucht.

Die unterschiedliche Reaktion Jahwes auf das Murren der Israeliten vor und nach dem Sinai, auf die schon V. Fritz (*Israel in der Wüste* [Marburg 1970]) in der jahwistischen Erzählung aufmerksam gemacht hat, stellt der Verfasser auch in der jehowistischen Schicht, der Priesterschrift und dem Endtext fest. Er interpretiert diese Übereinstimmung der verschiedenen Schriften mit der gleichen theologischen Intention, nämlich aus der Bedeutung des Sinai. Aber es wäre eher zu fragen, warum der Einschnitt durch den Sinai in den verschiedenen literarischen Werken konstant geblieben ist, ob es sich um eine Übernahme vorgegebenen Gutes oder um die theologische Intention der Redaktoren handelt, welchen Sinn sie dem vorgegebenen Gut zuweisen und wie sie es neu akzentuieren. Auf diese naheliegenden Fragen wird aber nicht eingegangen. Sie können auch ohne überlieferungsgeschichtliche Fragestellung nicht untersucht werden. So hat die Vernachlässigung der Überlieferungsgeschichte schwerwiegende Folgen für die Redaktionsgeschichte. Übrigens macht sie die Diskussion ab und zu kurzschlüssig; schon aus einzelnen gemeinsamen Ausdrücken allgemeiner Art wird eine literarische Abhängigkeit zwischen zwei Texten erschlossen, ohne die Möglichkeit eines überlieferungs- oder traditionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhangs zu erwägen, (z.B. zwischen Lev 9,24 und 1 Kön 18,39f. [131, 145] oder zwischen Num 20,1-13 und Jes 7,9 [107]).

Trotz der unscharfen Kontur der Redaktionsgeschichte trägt die Monographie mit der genannten Feststellung des Einschnitts am Sinai in verschiedenen Schriften zur Erforschung der Wüstenerzählung bei. Zudem

enthält die Exegese des umfangreichen Textkomplexes, die in "Formkritik" (98ff., 123ff., 160ff.) und "Interpretation" (150ff.) durchgeführt wird, wichtige Beobachtungen.

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Francis I. ANDERSEN—David Noel FREEDMAN, *Amos. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 24A). New York, Doubleday, 1989. XLIII-979 p. 16 × 23,5. \$30.00

I professori Francis I. Andersen e David Noel Freedman sono universalmente conosciuti come coautori del commentario ad Osea (700 pagine) pubblicato nella collana «Anchor Bible» nel 1980; dopo tale importante contributo, essi hanno pubblicato nel 1989 il monumentale commentario ad Amos che ci accingiamo a recensire, e progettano di completare il loro lavoro sui profeti dell'8° secolo con un analogo studio su Michea e su Isaia. Impresa gigantesca, che marcherà gli studi esegetici di questi anni; progetto importante, che ci invita non solo a discutere dei risultati conseguiti nello studio del profeta Amos, ma a riflettere sulle stesse modalità con le quali si elabora e si realizza un commentario scientifico. Certo, si rimane stupiti di fronte ad un libro che dedica più di 1000 pagine a 9 capitoli di un profeta minore; e con l'ammirazione, sorge una domanda: è forse cambiato qualcosa, in questi ultimi anni, nell'impostazione generale di un commentario? ci sono forse nuove questioni da affrontare che dilatano oltre misura tali opere esegetiche? L'impianto generale del commentario ad Amos di A.-F. non è in realtà innovativo, né rispetto alle esigenze della Collana «Anchor Bible», né rispetto alle modalità tipiche della produzione scientifica corrente, con l'eccezione forse di una analisi dei fenomeni letterari, retorici e stilistici, particolarmente attenta e diffusa. Speriamo che la nostra presentazione possa anche spiegare il perché di un'opera così voluminosa.

Come tutti i commentari, anche quello di A.-F. è diviso in due sezioni principali: da una parte l'*introduzione*, che discute i problemi generali del libro di Amos, dall'altra il *commento* che interpreta il testo biblico, brano per brano, versetto per versetto.

I. Nel commentario di A.-F. la parte introduttiva costituisce una piccola monografia sul nostro profeta (178 pagine). Riassumiamo alcuni dei punti principali trattati dai nostri autori, nei quali si evidenziano tra l'altro le questioni di metodo.

1. Riguardo alla critica del testo e alla critica storico-letteraria, la posizione di A.-F. si vuole moderata. Pur riconoscendo l'abilità e la precisione di certi studi filologici che intendevano restituire il testo nella sua forma «autentica», i nostri autori vogliono evitare emendazioni congetturali, «preferendo lasciare alcuni problemi irrisolti piuttosto che tentare di spie-

gare l'ignoto con l'ignoto» (3-4). Essi si difendono contro una eventuale accusa di conservatorismo dottrinale, assumendo una posizione pragmatica che riconosce il prestigio (ma non il privilegio) del TM: «our aim is to make as much sense as we can of the text as it now stands» (4).

Pur ammirando gli studi di critica letteraria i cui risultati sono condensati nei commentari esemplari di H. W. Wolff e di W. Rudolph, A.-F. scelgono di concentrarsi sul testo nella sua stesura definitiva; è l'opera globale e il suo intento come insieme letterario ad essere oggetto di considerazione e non i singoli frammenti separati. È loro opinione, d'altronde, che il testo di Amos sia un vero «libro», dotato di unità strutturale, e che sia stato scritto da Amos stesso o da un suo discepolo (5,11,141-144). È chiaro che, in questo genere di problematica, è più facile constatare l'infondatezza delle opinioni altrui che fornire argomenti probanti per le proprie tesi: A.-F. non sfuggono a questo destino, e ne sono consci. Ci si può chiedere in particolare perché, per apprezzare il testo attuale nella sua stesura redazionale, sia dal punto di vista della struttura letteraria, sia dal punto di vista dottrinale, debba essere necessario sostenere la (probabile) paternità letteraria di Amos stesso.

2. A.-F. collegano il libro di Amos con la storia del tempo e con la biografia del profeta. Anche in questo caso, appare chiaro l'intento di assumere posizioni moderate, evitando gli estremi opposti del fondamentalismo e della critica radicale. Le conclusioni a cui giungono (che Amos, ad esempio, abbia profetizzato tra il 765 e il 755, nel pieno regno di Ozia e di Geroboamo II) sono desunte quasi esclusivamente dal testo biblico, armonizzandone eventualmente i passi contrastanti. Scarsi i riferimenti alle fonti extra-bibliche o ai dati forniti dall'archeologia, che avrebbero potuto costituire uno sfondo importante per la storia politica e sociale di Israele nell'8° secolo; si ricorre invece ad un'opera apocrifa tardiva (*The Lives of the Prophets* [ed. C. C. Torrey] [JBLMS 1; Philadelphia 1946]) per una ricostruzione biografica non certo probante (24).

La ricostruzione della storia che ha prodotto il libro viene proposta da A.-F. come una semplice ipotesi di lavoro («perhaps the most likely chain of events») (7-9). Ecco come si sarebbero svolti i fatti:

(1) Amos è chiamato a profetizzare mediante le due prime visioni; egli intercede per il popolo, e lo esorta a convertirsi (capp. 5-6), ma non è ascoltato; perfino le piaghe mandate da Dio (cap. 4) non sortiscono effetto.

(2) Amos riceve altre due visioni, e ne annuncia le conseguenze negli oracoli di condanna rivolti a tutte le nazioni (capp. 1-3).

(3) Queste profezie provocano la reazione di Amasia, il sacerdote di Betel. Segue la quinta visione con le sue minacce di completa distruzione (9,1-10).

(4) Non manca tuttavia la speranza per un lontano futuro (9,11-15). A.-F. concludono: «the present arrangement is literary, not chronological. It presents an artistic schema, not a chain of cause and effect» (8-9); confessiamo di avere difficoltà nel comprendere le categorie utilizzate dai nostri autori.

3. Il contributo più originale di A.-F. vuole essere di tipo letterario. In particolare, molta cura e molte pagine sono consacrate alla struttura del li-

bro, che si ritiene debba essere diviso in tre parti, concluse da un «epilogo»:

a) *The Book of Doom* (capp. 1-4): insieme composito, caratterizzato dal tono di minaccia. Questa unità letteraria è diversa da quella proposta da altri autori, che considerano a parte i capp. 1-2 (seguiti dalla sezione 3-6).

b) *The Book of Woes* (capp. 5-6): unità caratterizzata dalla presenza di oracoli che iniziano con «guai» (*hōy*); tali oracoli tuttavia non sono una caratteristica esclusiva di questa parte del libro di Amos (cfr. 8,4.14; e, secondo A.-F., anche 2,7).

c) *The Book of Visions* (7,1-9,6): sezione chiaramente delimitata, organizzata attorno al tema delle visioni, anche se ingombrata da altro materiale eterogeneo.

d) *Epilogo* (9,7-15): esso ha importanti collegamenti con il resto del libro, ed è difficile distinguere tra elementi originali ed elementi redazionali (17).

Dobbiamo rilevare che nell'opera di A.-F., nonostante una continua e dettagliata cura nell'analisi retorica e stilistica, manca una criteriologia organica per la determinazione delle unità letterarie; si ha costantemente l'impressione che vengano sopravvalutati fenomeni letterari presi isolatamente.

Non ci sembra, in primo luogo, sia da incoraggiare l'idea di trovare costantemente delle armonie numeriche: per ottenere, ad esempio, una sequenza con 7 elementi si fanno delle acrobazie inaccettabili (5 volte l'invito ad ascoltare + 2 messaggi introdotti da *lākēn*; oppure: 2 oracoli introdotti da *hōy* + 5 participi, scelti fra i 19 del testo) (18). Il contare le sillabe, e in base ad esse stabilire strutture concentriche o parallele non convince (49-51).

Si abusa inoltre del concetto di inclusione. Essa viene supposta tra 2,6 e 4,12, a motivo della ripetizione del termine «Israele» (16); è evidente però che una sola parola, piuttosto frequente in Amos, ripresa a così grande distanza, non possa costituire un indizio sicuro di conclusione retorica. La medesima cosa vale per il rapporto tra *yhw* (1,2) che sarebbe ripreso da *'ēlōhēkā* (4,12) (42). Il termine *haššō'āpīm* in 2,7 e 8,4 «forms a conspicuous inclusion» (307): in realtà si tratta della ripetizione di una parola senza alcun valore di inclusione. Si afferma che c'è una inclusione tra 1,2 e 3,8, perché ritorna il medesimo tema del leone che ruggisce (17, 378); ma lo stesso fenomeno (questa è la nostra opinione) può essere interpretato come segno di inizio di due distinte sezioni: le unità letterarie sarebbero allora del tutto diverse (1-2; 3-6), con una indiscutibile incidenza sull'interpretazione.

La collocazione dei cosiddetti «inni» viene giudicata significativa, perché confermerebbe la strutturazione generale del libro di Amos: il primo inno (4,13) — essi affermano — conclude il *Book of Doom* (1-4); il terzo (9,5-6) «appare all'inizio dell'Epilogo (o alla fine del libro delle Visioni)»; il secondo (5,8-9) è invece «vicino all'inizio del *Book of Woes*» (17). A nostro avviso, il secondo inno non indica per nulla un inizio; si trova anzi nel centro di una struttura concentrica (studiata accuratamente da C. Coulot, *RSR* 51 [1977] 169-186; e da J. de Waard, *VT* 27 [1977] 170-177). Molti esegeti ritengono inoltre che l'epilogo del libro di Amos cominci in 9,11; il terzo inno quindi (9,5-6) non è situato alla fine del libro delle visioni. Quanto

al secondo inno, siamo d'accordo che esso concluda una certa unità letteraria; ma non riteniamo sia una ragione sufficiente per considerare i capitoli 1-4 una parte strutturante del libro. E questo argomento ci fa passare all'ipotesi presentata da A.-F. come una autentica scoperta.

Per l'organizzazione generale del libro di Amos, A.-F. attribuiscono decisiva importanza all'uso dei nomi che designano le varie entità geografiche e politiche (*Amos' Geopolitical Terminology*: 98-139). Secondo la loro opinione, il termine «Israele», quando è usato da solo, designa esclusivamente il regno del Nord (con capitale Samaria); quando invece è accompagnato da specificativi (come *bêt*, *b'enê*, *b'etûlat*, *'ammî*), allora qualifica la totalità del popolo di Dio, sia l'Israele storico dell'Esodo, sia l'unione (ideale) dei due regni. A sua volta, il termine «Giacobbe» viene usato per l'Israele storico; al contrario, i termini «Giuseppe» e «Isacco» sono dei sinonimi del termine «Israele» e indicano solo il regno del Nord. Questa teoria viene comprovata analizzando ogni singolo passo nel quale compare la terminologia suddetta, e viene avvalorata da un complesso sistema statistico che tiene conto del grado di probabilità delle affermazioni esegetiche precedenti. A conclusione di tanto minuzioso lavoro si suggerisce che la selezione e la disposizione dei diversi nomi (Israele e le sue varianti) «were deliberate and carefully and artistically disposed by the author/editor» (135). E tutto ciò serve a fondare o per lo meno a confermare la strutturazione generale del testo di Amos; in particolare, i capitoli 1-4 (prima parte), sarebbero caratterizzati da un uso specifico della terminologia «geopolitica», del tutto diverso da quello dei capitoli 5-6 (seconda parte).

È questo un punto sul quale abbiamo molte riserve. Ci sembra che la costruzione elaborata dai nostri autori non abbia serio fondamento. Le conclusioni a cui essi arrivano, pur suggestive, sono fondate su una serie di affermazioni gratuite, e ottenute a prezzo di facili approssimazioni. A.-F. riconoscono, ad esempio, che 1,1 sia una eccezione, e che 4,12 e 4,13 non si accordi perfettamente con la loro ipotesi: in questi casi, dicono, «Amos is not so free to use his own terms» (106). In 2,6 il termine *yisrā'el* sarebbe riferito al Nord, mentre l'espressione *b'enê yisrā'el* di 2,11 indicherebbe la totalità del popolo; in 3,12 però la medesima espressione *b'enê yisrā'el* qualifica chiaramente i soli abitanti di Samaria: si ha così l'impressione netta che si forzino i testi ad entrare in una griglia prestabilita. In una stessa unità letteraria, avremmo la giustapposizione di diversi destinatari: in 3,13 con *bêt ya'āqōb* ci si rivolge a tutto il popolo di Dio, ma nel versetto seguente (3,14) si parlerebbe del solo regno del Nord, perché compare il termine *yisrā'el*; in 5,4 *bêt yisrā'el* designa tutto Israele, mentre *bêt yôsēp* in 5,6 sarebbe un qualificativo del Nord. Gli autori stessi, d'altronde si rendono conto che il testo di Amos presenta una situazione non perfettamente rispondente a questa loro ipotesi: «most if not all the occurrences of "Israel", unmodified, fit the hypothesis that the name means the north distinctively, while not necessarily leaving the south out altogether» (106: siamo noi a sottolineare); e ancora: «it must be conceded that the language is so general that it makes sense whether applied to either kingdom or to both together» (107). In breve, non giudichiamo probante né l'ipotesi terminologica sostenuta da A.-F., né le conclusioni sulla struttura letteraria che da essa sono dedotte.

II. Nella Introduzione la distribuzione degli argomenti non appare perfetta: si parla della teologia di Amos (88ss.) prima di affrontare le questioni sull'autenticità dello scritto (141ss.); si tratta degli elementi decisivi per determinare la struttura retorica del testo (98ss.) dopo avere esposto dettagliatamente il contenuto del libro già organizzato in sezioni e pericopi (23ss.). Non si vede inoltre quale sia l'oggetto formale dei singoli paragrafi, nei quali l'Introduzione è suddivisa; si assiste così a qualche incoerenza e a spiacevoli fenomeni di ripetizione. Molto materiale sembra impertinente o viene collocato in una sede inopportuna: ad esempio, nel quadro di una presentazione globale del messaggio di Amos, ci si sofferma a discutere di un *lamed* vocativo (47); sempre nella Introduzione generale (63 e 111), si propone una correzione testuale, a cui si fa solo breve allusione nelle *Notes* (571).

Analoghi problemi di organizzazione del materiale si riscontrano nel *Commento* propriamente detto. Esso è una miniera di informazioni e di suggerimenti; la sua utilizzazione è tuttavia difficoltosa. L'organizzazione del materiale prevista dalla Collana ci pare poco raffinata; e ciò non favorisce né lo scrittore, né il lettore. È auspicabile che, in un commentario, si possano distinguere alcune rubriche, chiaramente definite, come ad esempio: traduzione, critica testuale e note filologiche, genere letterario e struttura, analisi delle singole parole o espressioni, sintesi teologica, o simili. Nel Commentario di A.-F. troviamo una *Introduction*, premessa alle tre parti principali del libro di Amos e all'Epilogo, e premessa quasi sempre anche a singole parti: la natura specifica di questa rubrica non è però chiarita (l'introduzione al *Book of Visions* è di 120 pagine; quella del *Book of Doom* solo di 8; per il *Book of Woes* ne abbiamo una decina). Seguono poi le *Notes*, in genere molto lunghe, che raccolgono tutte le informazioni di natura esegetica. Abbastanza spesso, specie nella sezione 5-6, abbiamo anche il *Comment*, che dovrebbe trattare delle proposte di emendazione del testo ebraico (139), ma che ha invece una natura assai varia. Abbiamo infine dei *Summary* o dei *Concluding Comments*, posti frequentemente alla fine delle grandi unità (manca però qualcosa di conclusivo per il *Book of Doom* 1-4).

La mancata chiarezza nelle rubriche in cui è articolato il commentario crea difficoltà al lettore che non sa mai dove trovare una informazione, dato che essa può essere collocata indifferentemente nella *Introduction*, nelle *Notes* o nel *Comment*. Inoltre, si producono inutili e fastidiosi fenomeni di ripetizione. Un solo piccolo esempio, fra i numerosissimi che si potrebbero fare: che l'espressione di Am 5,7 richiami Is 28,2 viene detto nella Introduzione generale (47), nelle *Notes* (484), nel *Comment* (485) e nel *Concluding Comment* (602).

Lo stile discorsivo, piuttosto prolisso, intende probabilmente favorire, in conformità con gli intenti di «Anchor Bible», un pubblico più vasto di quello degli austeri studiosi di esegesi biblica; risulta però spiacevole per chi desidera ottenere una informazione rapida e precisa. A questo proposito, sarebbe augurabile che i titoli correnti, in testa alla pagina, fossero più dettagliati, così da consentire al lettore una più veloce consultazione. Interessante l'idea di dotare il volume di carte geografiche (xvii-xx); avremmo però gradito che fossero più adatte a illustrare il libro di Amos: sulla cartina

dei Regni di Israele e Giuda sono indicate molte località, ma mancano siti importanti menzionati dal nostro profeta come Bethel, Eqron e Gat, Lebo-Hamat, Tiro, Teman e Bosra, ecc.; ci sfugge poi la pertinenza delle cartine illustranti le campagne assire e l'impero babilonese. L'indice dei soggetti è amplissimo (927-958); presenta però troppe voci, spesso inutili, per risultare pratico. La traslitterazione dell'ebraico è data a volte con la vocalizzazione, a volte senza; questo avviene anche nell'Indice dei termini ebraici (959-962), il che non facilita la consultazione.

Nonostante i rilievi fatti, l'opera di A.-F., a motivo dell'abbondanza delle informazioni e della approfondita discussione dei vari aspetti del testo, resta comunque un punto di riferimento obbligato per chiunque voglia studiare approfonditamente il libro di Amos.

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J. VÍLCHEZ LINDEZ, *Sabiduría*. Sapienciales V (Nueva Biblia Española) Estella, Editorial Verbo Divino, 1990. 569 p. 16 × 24

Il Libro della Sapienza ha goduto in questi ultimi anni dell'interesse di una schiera di studiosi sempre più numerosa. Mi limiterò a segnalare due opere importanti anche se in modo diverso: 1) i quattro volumi di C. Larcher, uno di *Études* e tre di commento (uscito postumo); 2) il grosso articolo di M. Gilbert, «Sagesse de Salomon», *DBS* XI (1986) 58-119. Il recentissimo commento (con traduzione del testo) di José Vilchez Lindez che stiamo presentando si colloca, come tipo, fra le opere di alta divulgazione, destinato, cioè, sia agli specialisti sia al pubblico colto. L'Autore — possiamo affermarlo senza riserve — ha raggiunto egregiamente questo duplice obiettivo. Il commento si distingue per vasta informazione, preciso esame degli studi citati, scelta oculata fra le ipotesi prospettate.

E ora veniamo a un esame meno generico. L'A. si schiera decisamente con la maggior parte degli esegeti moderni in favore dell'unità del Libro della Sapienza: unico scrittore greco (non traduttore) dal primo capitolo all'ultimo. Per quanto riguarda il genere letterario cui assegnare la Sapienza vengono enumerate le varie teorie che, alla fine, si rivelano tutte pressoché possibili. Secondo noi, quando un'opera non è dichiaratamente pensata in un dato genere letterario o almeno prevalentemente non appartiene a un genere letterario, può aver parti più o meno pensate in generi diversi. In sostanza anche la Sapienza può appartenere al genere epidittico, può assomigliare allo «specchio dei re», non è senza parti missionarie o apologetiche, è senz'altro un *midrash* dell'Esodo. Il Vilchez, comunque, informa con meticolosità e onestà. Sulla controversia della data, il Vilchez si allinea a tutti quelli che ritengono che l'epoca di Augusto rappresenti il termine *post quem* da me fissato già tanti anni or sono, in base al termine *χράτησις* che figura in Sap 6,3. Naturalmente ha ragione il Vilchez quando afferma che ogni

pretesa di ulteriore precisazione è velleitaria. D'accordo, a meno che non si basi su convincenti argomenti filologici o, meglio, linguistici. Personalmente sono sempre più convinto che l'Autore del Libro della Sapienza scrive ad Alessandria, come tutti dicono, e ha letto Filone. Tutti convengono che la Sap e Filone non siano distanti nel tempo (cfr. anche Larcher, *Études*, 176), ma intendono che Filone viene subito dopo. In un ambiente culturalmente vivace e relativamente piccolo un'opera come la Sapienza non sarebbe passata inosservata a Filone il quale avrebbe avuto modo e interesse per parlarne o almeno per alludervi in qualche modo, ma in Filone non c'è traccia, mentre nella Sap le tracce, anche linguistiche, di Filone sono frequenti e a me sembrano irrefutabili (mi limito, per esempio, a citare ἔθνῶν συγχυθέντων di Sap 10,5 e συγχυθέντες οἱ συγγέαντες di Philo *somn.* 2,290; ἀποικία vedi qui sotto; ἀδελφοκτόνος di Sap 10,3 e di Philo *cher.* 52 e *praem.* 68; ecc).

Ormai, come vedo, gli studiosi e il Vilchez con loro, sono concordi sull'epoca di Augusto e così potremmo invitare anche i Manuali e le Introduzioni ad allinearsi a tale *opinio communis*, mentre qualcuno parla ancora di 2°-1° secolo a.C.

Come destinatari, giudei e pagani, sono egualmente presenti nel libro, anche se non è propriamente un libro di propaganda, come giustamente osserva il Vilchez (73).

Sulla cultura greca del nostro autore è detto quanto basta, ma più che riguardo al nostro autore si dice che specialmente in Alessandria Platone e Senofonte erano autori letti (sulla scorta dell'articolo, tutt'altro che profondo, di S. Lange, «The Wisdom of Solomon and Plato», *JBL* 55 [1936] 293ss.), ma di Senofonte anche il Larcher (*Études*, 208) ricorda solo il tema delle due vie; Senofonte, secondo noi, è ben più presente; evidentemente, come nei secoli posteriori, già in Alessandria Senofonte, al di là del suo valore di storico e di filosofo o di scrittore, è massicciamente presente nella scuola per le sue doti di semplicità e di chiarezza; è, insomma, autore di scuola e lo PseudoSalomone se ne ricorda con termini e costrutti (uno studio, comunque, specifico manca).

La conclusione del Vilchez è mutuata dal Larcher (*Études*, 132): lo PseudoSalomone è un eclettico. Il termine è talmente ambiguo che va, forse, rifiutato. Secondo noi, lo PseudoSalomone ha idee chiare e le mantiene presenti in tutta l'opera: si serve variamente di termini presi in prestito da scuole diverse, ma le idee sono sue e sono ben chiare: la dottrina è quella dei Padri e non è minacciata dalla filosofia (= sapienza) pagana di nessuna scuola. I termini, anche evidentemente stoici, vanno sempre inquadrati in una dottrina religiosa che nulla concede al paganesimo, se non strumenti o immagini per esprimersi; questi termini non sono nemmeno usati con fine accattivante verso i pagani, come avviene, invece, in Filone. Lo PseudoSalomone va ammirato per la bravura con cui espone con i termini greci del suo tempo una dottrina o una storia o un'esegesi che gli sta a cuore.

Per i destinatari della Sap il Vilchez, in linea con la *probabilis opinio*, offre una conclusione molto ponderata: la Sap è scritta per istruire giudei e non giudei, pur non essendo opera missionaria. Noi, alle argomentazioni di contenuto, vorremmo aggiungere un'osservazione linguistica: se l'Autore

della Sap avesse voluto rivolgersi esclusivamente ai suoi correligionari (fedeli o apostati) non avrebbe usato una lingua che talvolta, evidentemente, si rivolge ai greci alessandrini con termini presi dalla loro letteratura più riservata (come i tragici, soprattutto Euripide) o con concetti di tipo stoico per proclamare la relativa somiglianza con le tradizioni giudee. Naturalmente sulla Sap più che la letteratura greca classica ha influito la greicità quale si viveva, insegnava, predicava in periodo ellenistico. La conoscenza della lingua ebraica da parte del nostro autore può essere messa in dubbio, anche se non esclusa. In sostanza è questione, alla fine, inaffidente (vedi Larcher, *Études*, 85-103). Al Vilchez forse potremmo ricordare che la continua emigrazione dalla Palestina ad Alessandria fu anche motivo della sopravvivenza della lingua ebraica in questo ambiente, ma resta certo che il Nostro conosce e usa esclusivamente la Bibbia di lingua greca (anche se poté ricorrere sporadicamente al testo ebraico).

Pagine di sintesi molto decise e molto illuminanti sono quelle che il Vilchez scrive (da p. 89 in poi) sulla personificazione e sulla natura della Sapienza. Il Vilchez (111) è propenso a credere che alcuni autori del NT abbiano conosciuto la Sap. La questione è molto discussa e forse è più prudente parlare di coincidenze e non di reminiscenze. Chiude l'Introduzione una breve storia delle fortune del nostro libro nei padri cristiani e nell'uso liturgico.

La traduzione del Vilchez è piana ed elegante, condotta sul testo greco criticamente fissato dallo Ziegler (edizione di Gottinga). Il testo greco non viene riprodotto, ma il commento — ovviamente — si basa unicamente sul testo greco con costanti osservazioni anche linguistiche, anche se l'esame linguistico non rappresenta la parte più impegnata in questo importante commento del Vilchez. Si è seguito il testo offertoci dallo Ziegler, ma almeno in un passo avremmo voluto che il Vilchez si ribellasse, in 5,7 dove lo Ziegler vuole correggere uno stico suggerendo una cervelotica forma greca: ἐνεπλήχθημεν, inesistente!

Un altro caso che meritava maggior attenzione è 12,5; il Vilchez sa che il testo è corrotto (indiscutibilmente, data la situazione disastrosa dei codici), ma la sua traduzione si adegua al testo datoci dal Ralphs e ripetuto dallo Ziegler. Per 12,4 noi crediamo che ἔχθιστα vada con ἔργα, altrimenti ἔχθιστα πράσσειν ha significato intransitivo (cfr. κακῶς πράσσω, «sto male»). I dissensi, ripeto, possono essere anche più numerosi, ma il Vilchez offre sempre l'informazione precisa, tale da rendere guardingo il lettore.

Tutto il testo è diviso in pericopi, ognuna preceduta da un inquadramento e seguita da un commento. Va lodata nel Vilchez l'informazione costante e abbondantissima, tale da offrire un valido aiuto a chi intendesse approfondire singoli punti o problemi. Forse qualche rimando ad opere o articoli di poca importanza poteva essere risparmiato senza paura di essere tacciati di disinformazione. Anche gli aspetti strutturali del testo sono colti con esattezza e puntualità, necessari per capire eventuali accentuazioni.

Naturalmente in tanta mole di lavoro, con una materia non sempre facile lo studioso potrebbe trovare qua e là (ma meno frequentemente di quanto si potrebbe temere) qualche affermazione che desta perplessità. Così a p. 140 andava puntellata meglio l'interpretazione data di ἐλεγχθήσεται.

In 12,7: «*colonia* o establecimiento de emigrantes en un país extranjero»; certo, questo è il significato classico di ἀποικία, ma la terra santa non era un «paese straniero»; ἀποικία sembrava già al Grimm termine usato impropriamente dal nostro autore, perché l'esodo dall'Egitto non era un *deducere coloniam*. Va osservato, però, che quest'esodo è detto — e con frequenza — ἀποικία anche da Filone (*Mos.* 1,71; *spec.* 2,146: τῆς μεγίστης ἀποικίας); è, quindi, qualunque trasmigrazione.

Nello stesso stico l'attributo ἄξια non significa «*digna*, por ser la del pueblo elegido por Dios», ma, poiché ἄξια è usato assolutamente significa «grande» (come in 19,4); l'ἄξια ἀποικία del Nostro è la μεγίστη ἀποικία di Filone; cfr. già Omero, *Il.* 9,261: ἄξια δῶρα (ecc.); ἄξιος è ciò che determina (sulla bilancia, ecc.); cfr. ἄγειν.

In 8,4: il Vilchez segue i più e traduce: «(la Sabiduría) es confidente del saber divino/ y selecciona sus obras». Ora immaginare in chiave cosmogonica che la Sapienza abbia scelto fra le varie proposte di Dio quanto andava creato e quanto non andava creato è mettersi in gravi difficoltà teologiche, qualunque spiegazione si tenti di dare. Un'idea molto vicina era venuta «in una triste notte» del 4 dicembre 1714 a Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Dio non avrebbe chiamato all'esistenza il migliore dei mondi, innumerevoli, possibili: «Ora mi piace pensare o meglio immaginare (*vel potius imaginari*) che Dio nella sua assoluta libertà... abbia preferito un mondo... che implichi una grande varietà di contraddizioni e di conflitti», ecc. Ma Leibniz si era spaventato della sua ipotesi e aveva subito aggiunto: «che Dio mi perdoni». Certo, questo è, in verità, il nostro mondo, ma non si può pensare a un mondo «beffardamente» (Leibniz) scelto fra i mondi possibili. È vero che αἰρετής è termine *hapax* assoluto in tutta la greco e, quindi, di difficile decifrazione, ma in Filone (e negli Stoici) si parla con frequenza del λόγος αἰρῶν, il Logos che detta, insegna (cfr. αἵρεσις, «dottrina»), ingiunge il da farsi: la Sapienza, come guida gli uomini nella contemplazione (è μύστις) dei misteri divini, così è αἰρετής, insegna, indica loro le opere di Dio (da compiere). Mi permetto di rinviare a un mio articolo di prossima pubblicazione su *Orpheus*, rivista dell'Università di Catania.

Come si vede, su questioni minime e controverse di questo tipo il censore non può dilungarsi. In conclusione, un commento esemplare: preciso, ricchissimo, aggiornato.

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Novum Testamentum

Vittorio FUSCO, *Povertà e sequela*. La pericope della chiamata del ricco (Mc. 10,17-31 parr.) (Studi biblici 94). Brescia, Paideia Editrice, 1991. 147 p. 13,5 × 21. Lit. 18.000

Le récit évangélique de l'appel du (jeune homme) riche suivi de ses compléments (Mc 10,17-31, par.) n'a cessé d'inspirer la vie chrétienne, donnant lieu aussi parfois à d'ardentes controverses touchant le statut de la pauvreté dans l'Église. Les discussions n'étant pas closes aujourd'hui même, V. Fusco a jugé utile de reprendre l'étude de ces pages célèbre dans un esprit dégagé de toute polémique, en lui appliquant les règles de la méthode historique-littéraire. Mais avant d'aborder chacune des trois versions synoptiques, il présente un tableau succinct des interprétations depuis les Pères de l'Église jusqu'à nos jours. Dans l'antiquité l'exégèse oscille entre une application universelle (surtout préoccupée du soin des pauvres) et celle qui voit ici le fondement des « conseils évangéliques ». À cette dernière lecture, qui fera fortune dans l'Église catholique, Luther oppose une fin de non recevoir: la vocation du riche est impérative et, tout en se limitant à l'individu en question, exprime l'exigence fondamentale pour tout chrétien de se libérer de l'esclavage des biens terrestres. Parmi les interprètes ultérieurs certains déplacent leur attention du problème spécifique de la richesse vers l'obligation d'adhérer au Christ et à son message ou vers la question du salut en général. Pour terminer, Fusco expose avec intérêt et de façon critique les deux exégèses catholiques récentes de S. Légasse (*L'Appel du riche* [Paris 1966]) et de W. Egger (*Nachfolge als Weg zum Leben* [Klosterneuburg 1979]).

L'étude est d'abord et principalement de caractère « synchrone »: il s'agit de « comprendre... le fonctionnement des divers éléments du texte à l'intérieur du contexte actuel » (17). Le détail des analyses des trois scènes qui composent la pericope dans chaque version ne saurait être reproduit ici. Qu'il suffise d'en donner les résultats. Marc veut illustrer le danger de la richesse en présentant une vocation spéciale, — celle des missionnaires itinérants —, où cette richesse s'est manifestée comme un obstacle redoutable et insurmonté. Le cas n'est pas universel, mais il est susceptible d'inspirer quiconque se trouve amené à effectuer un choix radical en matière de biens de ce monde pour adhérer à Jésus. Matthieu, à son habitude, procède de façon didactique: il reconstruit le dialogue marcién de Jésus avec le riche en l'articulant sous forme de trois demandes/réponses qui clarifient progressivement la pensée avec un crescendo. La première demande a obtenu une réponse complète en 21,19. Au v. 20 le problème se présente en termes nouveaux avec la question du riche: « Que me manque-t-il encore? » Car il lui manque quelque chose, que Jésus exprime en disant: « Si tu veux être parfait, va, etc. ». S'appuyant sur une remarque de James Barr, Fusco conteste la légitimité d'un recours sans nuance à Mt 5,48 pour établir une synonymie absolue entre les emplois de l'adjectif *teleios* de part et d'autre, les contextes étant différents. Certes, il ne faut pas nier que des deux côtés se traduit une forme de « radicalisme » typique des évangiles et que le rapprochement en-

tre les deux passages constitue une précieuse mise en garde contre la tendance à restreindre la perfection à une catégorie déterminée de chrétiens. Mais la perfection offre des modalités diverses et dans le cas du jeune homme riche, le paradigme, indiqué par le contexte suivant (les Douze, qui ont « tout quitté », ne sont pas le prototype des chrétiens en général mais, comme dans Mc, celui des missionnaires itinérants) ne diffère pas en substance de celui que Marc nous offre. Sans nier la possibilité de l'étendre à tous les cas où la richesse fait obstacle à la fidélité, les conditions de la perfection ici imposées ne concernent qu'une catégorie de chrétiens. L'interprétation lucanienne s'aligne sur les deux autres, en ce qu'elle expose elle aussi une vocation particulière, dont le rôle est néanmoins, à l'égard de tous les chrétiens, de stigmatiser « le pouvoir négatif de la richesse », thème cher à l'évangéliste.

L'auteur n'a pas voulu négliger la formation de la péripécie, encore qu'il n'ait ambitionné qu'une reconstruction hypothétique de la tradition. Matthieu et Luc n'ont pas utilisé en ce passage une autre source que Mc. Quant à celui-ci, son texte n'est pas d'une seule venue comme l'ont déjà remarqué maints commentateurs. La chose est patente entre les trois scènes où se succèdent des centres d'intérêt différents (*sequela/salut/sequela*), mais on la perçoit aussi à l'intérieur de chacune d'entre elle. La troisième a pour noyau initial la promesse d'une récompense pour ceux qui ont tout quitté à cause du Christ (Mc 10,29-30), écho de l'expérience missionnaire de l'Église primitive. Dans la deuxième scène le point de départ est un énoncé sur l'obstacle que dresse la richesse face à l'entrée dans le Royaume de Dieu, non la parole sur la difficulté d'y accéder en général (Mc 10,24b). Quant à l'épisode de l'appel du riche, il est surchargé et des tensions s'y manifestent. Bien des tentatives de le décomposer par strates restent hypothétiques. Néanmoins Fusco croit pouvoir conclure sur ce point en disant qu'au départ il s'agissait soit « d'un épisode qui comprenait un dialogue sur la vie éternelle, l'appel et le refus, dialogue dont le protagoniste était plus probablement déjà un riche » (131). Cette histoire a un fondement historique probable, en raison du caractère strictement personnel de l'appel en question, où par ailleurs on ne perçoit pas un accent de nouveauté radicale par rapport au régime de la loi: son observation reste la condition normale et générale de la vie éternelle.

V. Fusco nous offre une monographie claire et empreinte de grande délicatesse exégétique, notamment dans l'analyse littéraire. Leenseur, avec lequel il dialogue souvent, souhaitait améliorer une œuvre de jeunesse tant du point de vue de la méthode qu'en ce qui concerne les conclusions. Cette tâche lui est désormais épargnée. Sans concéder le moins du monde aux annexions illusoire qui voient dans ce récit, — celui de Mt en particulier —, le fondement pour ainsi dire direct de l'« état de perfection », Fusco évite un piège tentateur où il est facile de tomber quand on lit les évangiles: celui de vouloir généraliser en appliquant à l'existence chrétienne sans distinction tout ce qui est rapporté en paroles et en actes. Pour s'en prémunir il faut une bonne dose d'esprit de finesse. De cette qualité l'ouvrage de V. Fusco est un remarquable échantillon.

Xavier LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lecture de l'Évangile selon Jean*. Tome II (chapitres 5-12) (Parole de Dieu). Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1990. 509 p. 14 × 20,5. FF 180

Nur kurze Zeit nach Veröffentlichung des ersten Bandes des vorliegenden Kommentars (I, 1988) legt der Pariser Exeget nun den zweiten vor. Der dritte soll die Kommentierung abschließen. Da wir in dieser Zeitschrift (70 [1989] 137-139) bei der Besprechung des ersten Bandes bereits Grundsätzliches zur Eigenart der Auslegung des Vierten Evangeliums durch L.-D. gesagt haben, können wir uns hier etwas kürzer fassen.

Auch im vorliegenden Band fühlt sich L.-D. einer "synchrone" Auslegung des Textes verpflichtet (7 u.ö.). Damit hat jeweils der vorliegende Text ohne Berücksichtigung seiner möglichen Vor- und Entstehungsgeschichte Vorrang. Diese Vorgehensweise erweist sich auch innerhalb der Kapitel 5-12 des Johannesevangeliums (Joh) als fruchtbar. Beispiele sind etwa diejenigen Verse in Kap. 5 (V. 28f.) und 6 (V. 39.40.44), in denen vom kommenden Gericht oder von der kommenden Auferweckung zum Leben die Rede ist, aber auch die Verse 51b und 53-58 in Kap. 6, wo die Rede vom "Lebensbrot" einen eucharistischen Sinn erhält. Auch im vorliegenden Band ist nicht immer eindeutig, ob L.-D. mit der "synchrone" Lektüre des Textes nur einen Verzicht auf literarkritische Urteile meint oder ob in Fällen wie den genannten nicht eben doch ein Urteil im Sinne einer Ablehnung von Quellen oder redaktionellen Schichten zum Ausdruck kommt (vgl. 60 zu Joh 5,28f.; 139f. zu Joh 6,53-58 oder 374f. zu Joh 10,16).

Die Zurückhaltung gegenüber literarkritischen Theorien hat den Vorteil, daß L.-D. gute Strukturierungen größerer Texteinheiten gelingen. Genannt sei hier erneut die Hirtenrede von Joh 10,1-18 mit ihrem Abschluß in 10,19-21. L.-D. sieht mit Recht ihre enge Verknüpfung mit der Blindenheilung von Kap. 9 und die sich durchhaltende Polemik gegenüber den "unrechten Hirten", wie sie schon am Ende von Kap. 9 (V. 39-41) zum Ausdruck kommt. Auch die Zusammengehörigkeit von Kap. 7 und 8 wird gut gesehen. In Kap. 6 wird — gegenüber P. Borgen (*Bread from Heaven* [Leiden 1965]) — die Verankerung der Lebensbrotrede in ihrem Kontext erkannt. Zu fragen bleibt freilich, ob man sie erst in V. 35 beginnen lassen und dafür bis V. 66 ausdehnen sollte. Bei solchen Gliederungen wirkt sich L.-D.s Verzicht auf linguistische Methoden der Texterarbeitung im engeren Sinne aus. Sonst wäre die unmittelbare Rahmung der Lebensbrotrede durch V. 22-25 einerseits, V. 59 andererseits wohl besser herausgekommen (vgl. die Angaben zu Raum, Zeit und beteiligten Personen ebd.). Im Vordergrund stehen für L.-D. in der Regel stärker thematische Gesichtspunkte, wofür er die Aufteilung von Abschnitten der Jesusrede (etwa in Joh 6,43-51) auf zwei verschiedene Textteile in Kauf nimmt.

Im Rahmen seines gewählten Ansatzes bleibt L.-D. auch bei der religionsgeschichtlichen Einordnung des Joh. Einerseits bedeutet die "synchrone" Betrachtung des Textes den Verzicht auf durchgängige religionsgeschichtliche Vergleichsarbeit am Text. Auf der anderen Seite werden immer wieder Begriffe und Vorstellungen biblisch zurückverfolgt im Sinne einer "biblischen Theologie", wie sie für L.-D. (den Herausgeber des *Vocabulair*

re de Théologie Biblique [Paris 1970]) charakteristisch ist. Ob und wie weit eine solche "biblische Theologie" möglich ist, bleibt hierzulande umstritten. Generell wird zwischen Schriften oder Schriftengruppen innerhalb des Alten Testaments zu unterscheiden und deren literarische Beziehung sowohl untereinander als auch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments zu beachten sein. Dabei dürfte der Septuaginta als der Bibel der griechischsprachigen Synagoge eine besondere Rolle zufallen. L.-D. hebt ihren Text gerade in seiner Abweichung vom hebräischen nur in Einzelfällen hervor, dort aber mit Gewinn (vgl. 36 zur Vollendung der Schöpfung am sechsten Tage). Bei der Heranziehung von Texten aus dem zeitgenössischen Judentum greift L.-D. vor allem auf die orthodoxe Tradition, seltener auf die Qumrantexte und das hellenistische Judentum (etwa Philo v. Al.) zurück. Das führt u. a. zu der Schwierigkeit, den charakteristisch johanneischen Dualismus nur mühsam erklären zu können (der Rückgriff auf das Zwei-Wege-Schema von Dtn 30,15-20 dürfte für eine Erklärung kaum ausreichen). Lesenswert ist der kleine Exkurs zu "Satan" (307-310), der nicht nur L.-D.s Vertrautheit mit zwischentestamentarischen Texten, sondern auch mit hermeneutischen Fragestellungen zeigt.

Die Theologie und Hermeneutik des vorliegenden Bandes hält sich im Rahmen der im ersten Band eingeschlagenen Richtung. Die Option, das Joh — gegen einen weitverbreiteten Trend — vor allem in Kontinuität zum "Ersten Testament" zu lesen, führt zu einer differenzierten Sicht der Rolle der "Juden" innerhalb des Joh, selbst in dem problematischen Abschnitt Joh 8,31-58. Mit Recht wird seine Ausrichtung auf christliche Leser betont und vor einem antijudaistischen Verständnis gewarnt (vgl. 257f., 278f.).

Charakteristisch für die Auslegung L.-D.s ist die Unterscheidung von "erster" und "zweiter Zeit" einer Textlektüre. Sie hängt zum einen mit dem Verzicht auf literarische Schichtenscheidung, zum andern mit dem stärker spirituellen Verständnis von Schriftlektüre bei L.-D. (als französischem Exegeten) zusammen. So haben die Verse 53-58 in Joh 6 nach L.-D. zunächst einen christologischen Sinn: sie sprechen von Jesu Lebenshingabe bis in den Tod und dem Glauben daran, in einer "zweiten Zeit" aber auch vom Geheimnis der Eucharistie als der Gabe Jesu in den sakramentalen Zeichen (vgl. 141f.). Ebenso offenbart die Geschichte von der Blindenheilung in Joh 9 bei einer "zweiten Lektüre" einen sakramentalen Sinn, der in ihr einen Verweis auf die christliche Taufe sieht (355). Hier wäre zu fragen, ob ein solcher sekundärer Sinn dem Text selbst innewohnt oder nur aus kirchlicher Lektüre sinnvoll aus ihm herausentwickelt wird, wie etwa Beispiele aus den Kirchenvätern zeigen.

Damit wäre abschließend die Frage nach der Hermeneutik des vorgelegten Auslegungsbandes gestellt. L.-D. steht bewußt innerhalb der kirchlichen Auslegungstradition, wie der häufige Rückgriff auf Kirchenvätertexte beweist. Doch entstammen seine Reflexionen, mit denen er in der Regel größere Abschnitte beschließt, doch eher seiner ganz persönlichen Anfrage an den Text. Der Verzicht auf eine durchgehende Erarbeitung der pragmatischen Dimension der Texteinheiten führt dabei zu einer gewissen Beliebigkeit der Anwendungen des Textes in den "conclusions" und "ouvertures". Sie reichen von rein innertheologischen Fragestellungen (z. B. die

Frage, ob das Bekenntnis zur Gottessohnschaft Jesu mit dem Monotheismus vereinbar sei; 82f.) bis hin zu gesellschaftlichen (Ablehnung einer Einordnung Jesu in bestimmte ethische Systeme, die die Augen vor den Nichtgläubigen und den Verlassenen dieser Welt verschließt: 248). Vielleicht führt die zunehmende Reflexion auf das gesellschaftliche Umfeld von Exegese in den großen Metropolen unserer westlichen Welt auch zu einer zunehmenden Beachtung dieser zuletzt genannten Sicht.

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Charles A. WANNAMAKER, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (New International Greek Testament Commentary). Grand Rapids, Eerdmans-Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1990. XXVIII-316 p. 15,5 × 24

In this new commentary on 1 and 2 Thess C. A. Wannamaker provides us with a readable, up-to-date and scholarly exposition of the first two letters of Paul. The book has a lengthy and useful introduction (63 pages) containing a discussion of Paul's mission to Thessalonica as well as of the authenticity, the literary integrity and the chronology of the two epistles. The question of authenticity centers on the second epistle, which, under the influence of W. Trilling's *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief* (Leipzig 1972), has been widely regarded as non-Pauline.

Trilling's argumentation, which has swayed scholarly opinion for twenty years, is here subjected to a searching scrutiny. In this, W. draws heavily on I. H. Marshall and R. Jewett. Trilling's procedure consists in bringing together a number of smaller and weaker arguments, much as G. Dautzenberg (*Theologie und Seelsorge aus paulinischer Tradition* [Würzburg 1969]) did three years earlier. W. examines these arguments, exposes their weakness, and suggests that, taken together, they do not amount to a convincing proof. The point he makes, together with Marshall and Jewett, is that "a series of weak arguments based on marginal evidence does not add up to the case".

According to W., one of the major difficulties with Trilling's argument is that he neglects the contextual character of Pauline letters. In this, W. is able to use the hermeneutical insight of J. C. Beker (*Paul the Apostle* [Philadelphia-Edinburgh 1980]). Of course, this insight came to him some ten years after Trilling's work. Although the evidence for the authenticity of 2 Thess is inconclusive, as W. admits, attention to the different context of 2 Thess easily explains the differences.

W. then proposes to solve some of the problems which were raised by Trilling concerning the relationship between the two letters, suggesting that 2 Thess was written before 1 Thess. In this regard he is one of the group of scholars in North America associated with J. Knox's school. G. Lüdemann, in his discussion of the chronology of the Pauline epistles, has introduced

these views to the German scholarly world. But. W. asserts the priority of 2 Thess with a significant difference, maintaining as he does that it was the letter from Paul which Timothy took with him to Thessalonica, while 1 Thess is the apostle's response to the situation in Thessalonica after Timothy's return from there. The interval between the two letters is thus very short. The argument is interesting, but, to this reviewer, unconvincing.

W.'s discussion of the eschatological section 1 Thess 4,13-5,11 provides a good example of the quality of the commentary. His analysis includes the view which is now gaining ground that the real problem in Thessalonica concerned the deceased believers' sharing in the parousia of the Lord: how could they, who had been promised salvation, be taken up, when that event requires that they be alive? Unfortunately, W. does not ask why this particular difficulty arose in Thessalonica in the first place. The answer could only be that the apostle had earlier depicted the parousia as the taking up. In the second part of the eschatological section, 5,1-11, W. successfully presents the chiasmic structure in the affirmations in v.5, but fails to see the more encompassing stream of affirmations in this section, which extends from v.4 to v.10, with the exhortation in vv.6-8 interrupting it.

In short, W.'s commentary is a scholarly work of high quality. It is well written and should prove profitable.

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P. M. CASEY, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God. The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*. Cambridge, James Clarke & Co.-Louisville, Westminster/John Knox, 1991. 197 p.

This volume contains a considerably revised version of the author's Edward Cadbury Lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham in 1985-1986. Professor Casey enters the British debate over the truth of the dogma of the Incarnation on the side of those who consider it a pernicious myth, which serious Christian theologians ought to abandon. He assumes that evangelical and catholic Christians would rather hold onto an irrelevant belief in the impossible than adopt the results of reasoned inquiry. Casey holds that Christians ought to leave churches founded on false belief and follow whatever teaching of Jesus they judge relevant to life in the modern world (178). Of course, his functionalist and historicist methodology does not provide criteria for discerning what such teachings might be. A fellowship of Christians may as well put together its own canon of inspirational teachings, though Casey presumes that such a collection cannot include the pernicious teaching of Jesus' deity or incarnation.

Casey asserts that the exegetical monographs on New Testament Christology written in the past two decades fail to give a "coherent and convincing account of the origins and development of New Testament christology", (9). By adopting a functionalist sociological account, he hopes to succeed where the rest have failed. Since his criteria for "coherent and convincing" are dictated by a theological agenda, this method is no better equipped than any other to support his call for doctrinal reform. Leaving aside the dogmatic question, is a "coherent and convincing" account of the origins of New Testament Christology provided in this volume?

Any historical account requires that the historian provide a framework which enables him or her to select material, highlight significant transitions, and supply some description of the factors which motivated actors in the historical narrative. The value of a particular framework lies in the insights that it generates. New connections between apparently unrelated phenomena become possible. Or, perhaps, the narrative about the past becomes relevant and illuminating for the present. Prof. Casey's method should contribute to the latter, since it is derived from a pressing modern problem, the identity of Jews in the modern world. He rightly observes that identity involves a sliding scale. Some Jews are more assimilated to the culture than others. Identity is also a question of who the observer is. A person who might not identify himself or herself as "a Jew" might still be treated as "Jewish" by outsiders. Prof. Casey is also right to insist that we need to employ these concepts in understanding Second Temple Judaism and the complex picture of Jew, Christian Jew, Judaizers and Gentiles that we find in the earliest Christian communities.

In order to evaluate the extent to which a given group might be identified as Jewish in the Second Temple period, Casey employs a scale based on eight factors: ethnicity, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary laws, purity laws and major festivals (12). He also employs another distinction, which is not part of this scale, that between those Jews who are committed to detailed observance of *halakhah*, "the orthodox", and other Jews. The orthodox include the author of *Jubilees*, Essenes and Pharisees. However, his use of the term "orthodoxy" is often blurred. While these examples are sectarian and in the case of *Jubilees* and the Essenes represent groups that observe a different ritual calendar from the rest of Israel, it is not clear that the reform under Ezra-Nehemiah represents "orthodoxy" in the same sense. When these categories are applied to New Testament writings, analysis becomes even more difficult. Unless one or more of the items on the scale is discussed, we do not know how a given community responded.

In evaluating the Jesus movement, for example, Casey rates it six out of eight with only sabbath rules and purity regulations under dispute. However, the dispute is not about the items, themselves, but between Jesus' disciples and the "orthodox" (70-71). Where does Casey get his evidence? He depends upon passages like the controversies in Mark 7 and Q traditions like the attack on tithing (Matt 23,23-24; Luke 11,42). He insists that for the Pharisees purity was necessary to return to the Lord. For Jesus

and Galilean villagers such rules would have made repentance impossible (73). The conflict with orthodoxy enabled the Jesus movement to focus its definition of Judaism on the prophetic tradition, which was embodied in Jesus (72). The reader can only be baffled by the logic implied in such sentences as, "conflict with the scribes and Pharisees was highly functional" (73). The category "functional" crops up at every turn. Here, it means that the scribes and Pharisees established rules that effectively excluded a group of persons from salvation understood as "return to the Lord". Jesus' ministry is interpreted as bringing that group salvation.

No one familiar with contemporary reconstructions of Jesus' ministry can fail to see the origins of Casey's version in the social-sciences and liberation-theology approach to the early Jesus movement. But surely we have a right to ask whether the evidence he has introduced supports the claims he makes. He relies upon the caricature of scribes and Pharisees which comes from Christian communities that he will later identify as completely Gentile (Mark) or Jewish with a strong tendency toward assimilation (Matthew).

Since Casey's argument against incarnational Christology rests in part on the claim that neither Jesus nor most of the New Testament would accept its claims, problematic historical reconstructions weaken the case. A brief appeal to John the Baptist establishes the prophetic character of the Jesus movement. In order to show that Christians cannot rationally hold that Jesus was divine, Casey treats all sayings about the coming of God's rule as prophecies which failed to materialize. A human being can easily be in error about God's future activity; a divine person cannot (51, 168-169). One might have expected Casey to introduce some sociological description of the relationship between charismatic figures and the movements that gather around them. Casual references to bonding within the group of Jesus' disciples are all one finds (68-69). One might also expect a more sophisticated account of the functions of prophetic statements. The legitimating use of prophetic texts among the Essenes and in the formulation of early Christological affirmations to which Casey does refer should have alerted him to the possibility of diverse uses of prophetic speech patterns by Jesus himself.

When he sketches the development of Christology, Prof. Casey introduces two more methodological distinctions which are not entirely clear. He distinguishes between what he calls "static" and "dynamic" parallels in treating the various Christological titles and images found in the New Testament. "Static" parallels appear to refer to the usual parallel texts about "Son of Man", "anointed", "Son of God" and the like that one finds in most treatments of New Testament Christology. Casey is surely right to observe that scholars pile up fragments of Jewish texts that refer to different figures. The background to any particular Christological title is often patched together from very different specimens. He also observes that the lack of a single Jewish parallel to a particular title or concept is often exploited as evidence for the uniqueness of Jesus in a theological sense (81). "Dynamic parallels" are introduced to overcome this weakness. Casey sets out to show that the treatment of various figures of heavenly or

quasi-divine status shifts with time. One version of the Davidic Messiah king need not conform to another (82). This sensible observation becomes more problematic when Casey sets out to show a functionalist correlation between the treatment of figures like Moses and Enoch and the needs of the community (82-94).

This exercise turns out to provide a crucial link in his argument. The functionalist treatment of divine agents and heavenly mediator figures in Second Temple Judaism supports the claim that a similar process took place among the early followers of Jesus. The evidence is just as difficult to state in the case of Jewish writings from the period as it is for the New Testament. Once again it is difficult to discern how Casey has determined which subgroups represent the "orthodox" wing of Judaism and which do not. The most we learn from the exercise is that monotheism controlled all speculative innovations (85).

Casey's account of the emergence of incarnational Christology uses static rather than dynamic parallels. However, the appeal to monotheism's influence echoes throughout the rest of the book. Despite the eight identity factors in the scale, monotheism becomes the controlling difference between acceptable and unacceptable Christological claims.

The second schema used to organize the developmental account invokes three stages or types of Christian community (97). While the first two types continue to exist alongside the third, it is the embodiment of the third in Johannine traditions that generates incarnational Christology. The first stage sees Christianity as another Jewish subgroup; the second, as a movement which now embraces significant numbers of Gentiles who do not become Jewish; the third, as an identifiable religious movement among the Gentiles. Only in the last type of community is it possible to shed the restraints of monotheism and treat Jesus as a divine being. Even though Casey holds that pre-Pauline traditions like Phil 2,6-11 and Col 1,15-20 depict Jesus as pre-existent (112-116) and even though Pauline ethics has replaced the Law with commitment to Christ (128-129), Jewish monotheism has not been compromised. Casey assures us that even an observant Jew like Jesus' brother James could accept Phil 2,6-11 "because he already felt that Jesus had been the embodiment of Judaism" (137).

At this point Casey begins to introduce a different sociological category, conflict theory. Even the Christology which develops in the Pauline communities of stage two implies conflict with Christians like James over whether or not identity factors like circumcision, sabbath and the like could be dropped. Decline in observance of the Law forces Jesus into the center of the community's identity structure and necessitates a higher Christology (138). Casey also hypothesizes that "the conflicts intensified by the war between Israel and Rome drove christological development up to the deity of Jesus and expelled the Johannine community from the synagogue" (138). The causal assertions made in this sentence are never demonstrated, nor could they be.

Jewish scholars have frequently challenged the emphasis which Christians have placed on the war of 70 CE and on the synagogue expulsion which figures prominently in Johannine narrative. The introduction of

rhetorical and literary criticism into the toolbox of gospel criticism has warned exegetes against making historical claims directly from literary features of the text. Casey, himself, rejects Raymond Brown's designation "crypto-Christians" for those whom the Fourth Gospel depicts as believers who remained within the synagogue (John 12,42-43) as illegitimate historicizing of a textual allusion (35). Like Jesus himself, they would have referred to themselves as Jews.

Conflict separates Christianity from Judaism to such an extent that monotheism no longer moderates what may be affirmed of Jesus. Adherence to true teaching about Jesus becomes the glue which holds the Christian community together. Johannine Christianity also evidences the fatal alliance between the deity of Jesus and anti-Semitism. Casey insists that on moral grounds Christians cannot accept a Christology which propagates the view that Jewish belief is blindly opposed to the truth revealed by God (163-165). Since incarnational Christology arose to fill a functional need, i.e. holding together a large social group, it can also be rejected (176-178).

Proof. Casey's book raises several interesting methodological possibilities. It also challenges the comfortable sense that a developmental Christology "from below" can adequately ground the belief of the Church in Jesus as both divine and human without compromise to either reality. But the arguments advanced are neither coherent nor compelling enough to relegate the Incarnation to the rubbish heap of intellectual folly.

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Michael SOKOLOFF, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash and Targum II). Ramat-Gan, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990. 823 p. 24,5 × 17

Finally a dictionary has been produced to guide students of the Aramaic literature and language in a large body of important Jewish writings. It is a welcome production, well conceived, and carefully realized.

In the past we had to depend on such lexica as those of J. Levy (*Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil des rabbinischen Schriftthums* [2 vols.; Leipzig 1867-68] and *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* [4 vols.; Leipzig 1876-89]), M. Jastrow (*A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [4 vols.; London 1886-90; often reprinted in two vols., or even in one]), and G.H. Dalman

(*Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Mi-drash* [Göttingen 1901; repr. Hildesheim–New York 1967]). The trouble with these older lexica was that they booked together both Aramaic and Hebrew words from this literature, as their titles often revealed. Moreover, their coverage of the vocabulary, either Aramaic or Hebrew, was far from complete, and one had to go from Dalman to Jastrow to Levy to search out words and their meanings. Whereas Jastrow and Levy supplied many instances of vocables in this Jewish literature, Dalman's dictionary was often better for students, who were seeking some proficiency in the Aramaic language because he usually booked the words according to normal forms, whereas the others often introduced the rabbinic *scriptio plena* for their entries, which made it very difficult to discover where these editors had listed words.

Now Sokoloff has provided us with an Aramaic dictionary that enables one to see how the vocabulary of that language has been used in this vast corpus of Jewish writings. The *scriptio plena* is found in the instances cited, but not in the key word at the head of the article. From this dictionary one can get a good picture of the nature of Aramaic in this late period of its development, without being distracted by cognate Hebrew entries. Moreover, with the aid of an electronic computer, key-word-in-context concordances, and various Israeli research projects, Sokoloff has been able to subject to lexico-morphological analysis texts employing 300,000 words. "As a result, the articles in this dictionary are based on a complete — not a partial — lexical collection" (5).

This dictionary lists then all the Aramaic words appearing in Aramaic contexts in the texts studied, but Aramaic loanwords in Hebrew contexts are not included. Personal and geographic names have been omitted, and Greek, Latin, and Hebrew words appear only if their forms have been aramaized.

The sources from which Sokoloff derives this Jewish Palestinian Aramaic are inscriptions, the Palestinian targumim (from which he wisely omits Pseudo-Jonathan), the so-called fragmentary targumim, Targum Neofiti 1, fifteen Palestinian midrashim, Aramaic parts of the Palestinian Talmud, Geonic literature, Aramaic poetry of the Byzantine period, papyri from Egypt, amulets, Palestinian *ketubbot* (marriage documents), and notes from the Tiberian Masorah.

Sokoloff has done well to add to the title of his dictionary the phrase "of the Byzantine Period". He thus wisely dates the late character of the Aramaic found in this corpus of Jewish writings. It is important that he has included not only the usual Jewish writings of the Byzantine period, but also the inscriptions. He has wisely made use of the collection of them prepared by J. Naveh in הכתובות הארמיות והעבריות מבתי הכנסת העתיקים (על פסיפס ואבן: הכתובות הארמיות והעבריות מבתי הכנסת העתיקים) (On Stone and Mosaic [Jerusalem 1978]). Such inscriptions date from the third to the sixth centuries AD and not only give one a concrete idea of the kind of Aramaic then in vogue, but help to date the similar Aramaic in otherwise undated literary texts. Many of these inscriptions can be found in the collection that D.J. Harrington and I published, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (Second Century B.C. – Second Century A.D.)

(BibOr 34; Rome 1978) Appendix, 251-303. We collected such texts in the appendix to show the difference of language in them from the texts of the main part of the book.

Those who make use of Sokoloff's dictionary should take note of this dating not only of the Aramaic that he has analyzed, but also of the literature on which it has been based. They should resist the temptation to appeal to forms, words, or meanings given for this period of Aramaic as an indication of Aramaic of earlier periods. Thus the two columns on p. 100 list many references for *בריש* or *בריש* or *בריש*, in the forms that one expects at this period, but only one of them (the Samaritan Targum of Num 23,19) gives the older form *בר אנה* (with the original unapocopated *aleph*), which would be the way the word appears in the first century BC or AD (as in 1QapGen 21,13 [בר אנה]; 11QtgJob 26,2-3 [בר אנה]; 9,9). Sokoloff notes at the end of the article, "In reliable texts, our word is always spelled *בריש*, *בריש*, as in CPA [= Christian Palestinian Aramaic]. This orthography was generally corrupted to *בר נש* and further to *בר אנה*, esp. in Targumic texts, but also in PT [= Palestinian Talmud]..."

Sokoloff, however, defines both *אנה* and *בריש* as "person, (some) one". This is a laudable attempt to avoid the sexist word "man" (which does eventually appear on p. 100), but it creates a theological problem; one, however, with which Sokoloff, working with Jewish texts, does not have to reckon. For *בריש* is used in Syriac, but never with the meaning of "person". There *paršôpâ* (= Greek *πρόσωπον*) appears in Nestorian texts and other theological or trinitarian writings for "person". And after all, in Aramaic both *אנה* and *בר אנה* (or *בריש*) basically mean "human being" (= Greek *ἄνθρωπος*).

The dictionary includes 224 pages of indices, which list all the words that have been booked from the different inscriptions and texts treated in the main part. The utility of these indices is not immediately apparent. Few users of the dictionary will be interested to learn that the words listed from Tg. Neofiti of Gen 1,1 are *מן לקרמן*, *חוכמה*, *אנע*.

Sokoloff has added to a number of articles in the dictionary references to publications which discuss the word in question. These are often good, but in this area many other things could have been added. Yet what is there is at least a good start.

It is surprising that there is no reference in this book to Dalman's *ANHW*, mentioned above. In explaining the purpose of his dictionary, Sokoloff calls attention to examples of words which occur in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, but which are not found in "existing dictionaries" (4). In n. 16 he lists seven such words, but all of them are found in *ANHW*, with exactly the meanings that Sokoloff mentions. They are also found in Jastrow's *Dictionary*, which he wrongly claims was "completed in 1903" (4). The two-volume form appeared, however, as early as 1886-90 in London. It was already mentioned in *AJSL* 15 (1898-90) 57.

Some explanations in the dictionary need scrutiny. For instance, Sokoloff thinks that *קבור* may be derived from an "original *qutl* or *qētol*" form. "The evidence of the closely related A [= Aramaic] dialects points to the existence of both base forms" (103). But what evidence is there for any

base form with a reduced vowel? Sokoloff cites no evidence from the alleged related dialects. The *qētōl* forms are a peculiar Aramaic development of original *qul* noun types. That they appear at times in Hebrew as well is undoubtedly under Aramaic influence. After all, the Semitic cognates all point in this direction: Akkadian *bukru*, Arabic *bikr*, Syriac *bukrâ*. Hence כְּבוֹר is simply another instance of the Aramaic group found in such words as קֶשׁוּט, “truth”, or תְּקוּף, “strength”, well known from Biblical Aramaic. They developed thus: *bukr* > *búkur* (by the addition of an anaptyctic vowel of the same color as the first vowel to break up the consonantal cluster at the end of the word) > *bukúr* (with the shift of the accent to the ultimate) > *běkôr* (with the reduction of short vowel in pretone and the shift of *ú* to *ó*, written *plene*, but not really a long vowel in Aramaic).

Sokoloff notes that the use of אִשְׁכָּה in the sense of “be able” is already found in 1QapGen 21,13 (550), but he could have added as well 4QEn^a 1 ii 8; or 4QEnGiants^b 1 ii 13 (mistranslated by Milik).

It is a mystery why שְׁכַלִּל should be listed independently (550), when its forms are all easily explained as shaphel of כָּלַל, even if it must be recognized that the form possibly arose as a loanword from Akkadian *uškallil*. Again, would it not have been better to give Akkadian *šuklulu* as the form from which the noun שְׁכַלִּל is borrowed, rather than the verb שְׁכַלִּל?

Such criticisms are minor and do not detract from the value of this dictionary. Sokoloff has put all students of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic in his debt, and his dictionary will long be used.

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P. W. VAN DER HORST, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE) (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 2)*. Kampen, Kok Pharos, 1991. 179 p. 22,5 × 15

This book has been waiting to be written for almost sixty years. In 1936 the first volume of Jean-Baptiste Frey's *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* (Rome) appeared. The second volume was published posthumously in 1952, but the manuscript had been basically completed in 1935. Since then new inscriptions have been discovered and published. At present there are some 2,000 Jewish inscriptions from between the third century BC and the seventh century AD (the chronological limits of Frey's collection). About 80% of them are funerary inscriptions. Since the appearance of Frey's work individual scholars have made specialist studies of particular texts. Other scholars have used some of the material in research on a wider topic (e.g., B. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogues* [Chico 1982]). Still others have integrated the Jewish funerary inscriptions into synthetic

presentations (e.g., M. Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* [London 1990]). What has been lacking is a straightforward introduction to the Jewish funerary inscriptions that would open up the research of Frey and his successors to students of Second Temple Judaism and the NT as well as those who work in rabbinics and classical philology.

This volume succeeds nicely as a first orientation to the world of early Jewish funerary epigraphy. Its author is now professor of NT and of the Jewish and Hellenistic Milieu of Early Christianity on the faculty of theology at the University of Utrecht. His new academic title (as of 1991) expresses the extraordinary breadth of his scholarly interests and competencies. His book *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden 1978) and the several collections of his articles (*De onbekende god* [Utrecht 1988]; *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* [Fribourg-Göttingen 1990]; and with G. Mussies, *Studies on the Hellenistic Background of the New Testament* [Utrecht 1990]) indicate that he knows the milieu of early Christianity in all its diversity and richness. In this introductory survey of Jewish funerary inscriptions between 300 BC and AD 700 he shows even more facets of wide learning.

This first part of the book focuses on the texts themselves. After explaining where one can find the publications of these inscriptions, van der Horst takes up some methodological issues: identifying an inscription as Jewish, determining its date, and evaluating the geographical distribution. Next he discusses the languages of the Jewish funerary inscriptions (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic), noting that "most of them are written in a very poor and vulgar Greek" (24). Then he gathers various forms, formulas, and motifs found in the texts: terms for "grave", dedications and memorial formulas, expressions of grief, addresses to passers-by and to the deceased, and curses. Finally he deals with the virtues ascribed to the deceased ("epithets"): those found also in pagan epitaphs, and typically Jewish epithets.

The second part explores the significance of the texts for understanding Jewish life between 300 BC and AD 700. About one-third (c. 540) of the Jewish epitaphs indicate the age at death of the deceased, which turns out to be for men 29 years and for women 27 years. Next van der Horst combs through the texts to discover what can be known about functionaries within the Jewish religious communities and what secular professions Jews undertook. Then observing that at least 40% of the Jewish epitaphs are of women, he examines their epithets, the indications that women held leadership positions, and the prominence of women among the proselytes and God-fearers. Finally he considers what can be learned about Jewish attitudes toward death and afterlife (including judgment).

The chapter on the relevance of the ancient Jewish epitaphs for NT research gives particular attention to the Jewish milieu of early Christianity, some particular problems (e.g., the existence of the God-fearers), beliefs in afterlife, and persons known from the NT. The final chapter presents a sample of sixteen ancient Jewish epitaphs in their original languages (twelve in Greek, three in Latin, one in Aramaic). A ten-page bibliography and various indexes conclude the volume.

The author has produced a reliable and readable introduction to the ancient Jewish epitaphs. He claims to have used about 1,000 inscriptions as his basic corpus. His analysis of the sixteen sample texts in the final chapter gives the reader a feel for the texts and how they should be studied. In the course of his discussions throughout the book he weaves in many more texts, thus familiarizing the reader with the language and conceptuality of the inscriptions. He relies on the best scholarship in certain areas: e.g., F. Gignac for Greek grammar, R. Lattimore on themes in Greek and Latin epitaphs, and B. Broton on women in the Jewish synagogues. One comes away from the book feeling enlightened and eager to do further work in the field — precisely what an introduction to any subject or discipline should do.

The enthusiasm likely to be engendered by the book needs to be tempered by a sober assessment of the methodological problems one encounters in studying the Jewish funerary inscriptions. The author faces these issues. But they need to be stressed. How does one know that an inscription is Jewish? The usual criteria are discovery in an exclusively Jewish settlement, Jewish names, the words “Hebrew” or “Jew”, and technical terms such as “synagogue” or “sabbath”. One needs a combination of two or more of these criteria. But many Jews took names indistinguishable from those of pagans and Christians. And what constitutes an exclusively Jewish settlement is not always clear. Over 25% of the inscriptions come from Rome. Despite the author’s claim that “the Roman Jews lived in relative isolation” (23), there is increasing evidence for a more complex interaction there between Jews and their pagan and Christian neighbors (see now L. V. Rutgers, “Archaeological Evidence for the Interaction of Jews and Non-Jews in Late Antiquity”, *AJA* 96 [1992] 101-118).

How does one date and place these inscriptions? The author observes that there is virtual agreement that all the inscriptions studied in this book date from between Alexander the Great and Muhammed, and that the vast majority date from the first five centuries AD (20). Moreover, the inscriptions represent the entire Mediterranean world and beyond — from Morocco and Spain in the West to Babylonia in the East. This is a gigantic chronological and geographical spread. And even so, there is controversy over when or where this or that inscription originated. The author has wisely followed the experts (J.-B. Frey, L. Robert, B. Lifshitz, and others). But those who use these texts should be aware of the problems involved in situating them in a precise historical setting.

With these methodological cautions kept in mind, the Jewish funerary inscriptions can contribute to our understanding of Judaism in Late Antiquity and even early Christianity. Jews appear, on the one hand, to have been very much part of the wider world in which they lived. They wrote (and presumably spoke) Greek not only in the Diaspora but even in the land of Israel. They shared many of the values and hopes of their neighbors (as indicated by the epithets). Some used “pagan” formulas and literary allusions to mark the graves of their loved ones. The basic motive behind their epitaphs was to keep alive the memory of the deceased. They shared with pagans a short life expectancy and a high infant and child mortality.

On the other hand, the prominence of official Jewish titles (*archisynagōgos*, *grammateus*, *hypēretēs*, etc.) over secular professions or occupations highlights the central role of the synagogue in Jewish life. The texts also suggest hitherto unnoticed leadership roles for women in Jewish life and the attractiveness of Judaism for women either as proselytes or God-fearers.

Only one text (CIJ 643a, a 6th-century Latin text from Aquileia) mentions a convert from Judaism to Christianity. This material is more important for what it reveals about the Hellenistic conventions and ideas adopted by Jews and about the “very much Hellenized Judaism” (132) in which early Christianity took shape. There is little evidence of rabbinic control over the Jews of the funerary inscriptions.

A few NT phrases are illumined by these texts: “Take it easy, eat, drink, enjoy yourself” (Luke 12,19b); “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23,42-43); “Woman is the glory (*doxa*) of man” (1 Cor 11,7). While van der Horst rightly dismisses the ossuary inscription “Jesus, the son of Joseph” because both names are too common, he does give more credence to “Alexander, the son of Simon” (see Mark 15,21) and “Yehoḥanah, daughter of Yehoḥanan, son of Theophilus the high priest” (see Acts 4,6). An even more promising discovery occurred apparently after van der Horst’s book was completed: the family tomb of Caiaphas the high priest. See the reports by Z. Greenhut, R. Reich, and D. Flusser in *Jerusalem Perspective* 4, nos. 4-5 (1991).

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NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

Old Testament Theology, Tanakh Theology, or Biblical Theology? Reflections in an Ecumenical Context⁽¹⁾

I.

The title of my paper includes three expressions that in certain contexts seem to be more or less interchangeable. The term biblical theology often is used in a wider sense embracing Old and New Testament. But it can be used as well in a more unspecific way to refer to a theological treatment of only one part of the Christian Bible. In Jewish contexts the word biblical always refers to the Jewish Bible as a whole, that is to the three-part canon of Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim that Jews also refer to as Tanakh.

In some contexts these terminological variations are more or less irrelevant. When Christian and Jewish scholars of the Hebrew Bible are working together it does not matter whether they define the corpus they are working on as Bible or as Old Testament. Most Christian scholars would not mind in this context to use the word Bible in reference only to the Jewish or Hebrew Bible. Vice versa, today most Jewish scholars participating in international and interreligious studies of the Hebrew Bible would not mind to use the word Old Testament. This became obvious when in 1986 the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament held its great international congress in Jerusalem and nobody considered to change the name of the organization or the name of the congress for that purpose.

But it is not always the case that this terminological question is felt to be that irrelevant. Some Jews do not like the term Old Testament because they are aware of a longtime Christian tradition in which "old" was understood in the sense of outdated and thereby obsolete, or at least inferior to the new, and therefore they feel this expression to be part of Christian ideas of superiority over Judaism or even of substitution of Judaism by Christianity. That is why today even in some Christian circles engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue the expression Old Testament is not used any longer.

⁽¹⁾ Following is the text of the public lecture, a part of the Joseph Gregory McCarthy Visiting Professorship, given at the Pontifical Biblical Institute on March 13, 1992.

But then another terminological problem emerges. What shall be the alternative expression to be used by Jews and Christians together? Are the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Tanakh identical? Obviously not. Some Christians want to use the term Hebrew Bible. But this is difficult because in the Christian tradition from a very early time on the Bible was either Greek or Latin, but not at all Hebrew. As a Protestant I could say: thank God, our Reformer Martin Luther gave us the Hebrew Bible back so that we now have a common Bible with the Jews. But do we really? Do we have a canon with the three parts of the Tanakh: Torah, Prophets and Writings? Obviously we do not because Luther more or less kept the order of the books of the Old Testament as it came down to him by the Greek-Latin tradition. So we read the same text as the Jews when studying the first part of our Bible in its original language, but we do not have the same canon. This is particularly evident when we compare the place of prophecy in both canonical orders. In the Jewish canon the prophets follow immediately after the Torah performing a very significant interplay with it. In the Christian canon, however, the prophets are put at the end pointing forward to the following second part of the Bible. Thus the question whether Jews and Christians have a common Bible, with regard to the first part of the Bible is to be answered: Yes, and No.

From here follows the next aspect of the terminological problem. The Old Testament is only the first part of the Christian Bible, and the Tanakh is also only the first part of the basic Jewish religious literature, the Written Torah, that is continued and completed by the Oral Torah (Mishnah and Talmud). Thus in both contexts the question emerges: Is a theology of the Old Testament or Tanakh possible without including the following part of the canonical literature?

II.

Let us begin with the Christian part of the question, and let us go back for a moment into the history of this problem. The expression "biblical theology" had been coined more than two hundred years ago by Johann Philipp Gabler. In 1787 he delivered his famous academic lecture entitled *Oratio de iusto discrimine theologiae biblicae et dogmaticae*. It was Gabler's intention to distinguish "biblical theology" from "dogmatic theology", that means, to separate biblical theology from dogmatic theology and thereby first of all to create biblical theology as an independent theological discipline. Thus biblical theology came into being as a subdivision of Christian theology. In this concept in principle, biblical theology included Old and New Testament. Hence, at that time our present problems did not exist at all.

In the two centuries since Gabler, however, two main developments took place. First, biblical studies more and more lost their relationship to theology and developed into an independent field of various historical, philological, literary, religio-historical and archeological studies, many of them being much closer related to the respective fields of humanities than to theology in the traditional sense. Thus "biblical theology" turned into a

mainly historical venture, so that many scholars changed the title from "Old Testament (or New Testament) Theology" into "History of the Israelite Religion" or "Early Christianity in the framework of ancient religions" or the like. This included also a division into the two fields of Old Testament and New Testament theology. But this was at that stage much more a practical than a principal, or even theological, decision.

Secondly, since the First World War a new theological interest in biblical theology arose. This implied, at least partially, a return to the earlier understanding of "theology". At that time, the problem of biblical theology was mainly a matter of Protestant theologians, almost exclusively Germans. The leading Old Testament theologians of that generation were strongly influenced by the theology of Karl Barth, and therefore they wanted to make biblical theology again an integral part of theology in general. This is true for Walther Eichrodt as well as for Gerhard von Rad. But in the meantime the division of biblical studies into the two separate fields of Old and New Testament studies had been firmly established so that the problems of Old Testament and New Testament theology seemed to be almost unrelated to each other.

But let me pause here for a moment. The actual separation of Old and New Testament studies only took place at the beginning of this century. Some famous Old Testament scholars like Wellhausen and Gunkel still published in New Testament studies as well. But biblical theology as embracing Old and New Testament since Gabler's times mainly existed in theory. In several cases a book on Old Testament theology was entitled "part one" of a biblical theology; but part two never appeared. Only a very few books actually containing a kind of biblical theology were published during the nineteenth century. And only in the last few decades there is a new discussion on that question.

But back to history. The return to a new theological approach in biblical studies together with a definite separation of Old and New Testament studies, for Old Testament theologians caused a new and rather precarious problem, namely the question how the Old Testament was appropriately to be related to the New Testament. This question has various aspects: Is the Old Testament in the framework of Christian theology to be seen as an independent book that has its own message and relevance? Or is the Old Testament only relevant in close connection with the New Testament, even read through the glasses of the New Testament? Or finally, is the Old Testament no longer to be understood as part of Christian theology at all?

The last mentioned position was already expressed by Adolf von Harnack in his famous book on Marcion in 1921 where he called on the Christian church to free itself from the Jewish Old Testament that in his eyes could no longer be seen as part of the Christian theology at all. Similar positions were held by several scholars in the following decades. I mention Emanuel Hirsch and Rudolf Bultmann who both, while looking from different theological points of view, could only see the Old Testament as the dark background of the New Testament; and Friedrich Baumgärtel who saw the Old Testament as the testimony of a foreign religion.

During the Nazi period, for German theologians the problems became even more complicated because of the fierce fight about the validity of the Old Testament within the Christian church. The contestation of this validity included the emphasis that the Old Testament was a Jewish book and therefore could not be used any longer in a German Christian church. In reaction to that some of the most engaged and successful defenders of the Old Testament, as e.g. Wilhelm Vischer, declared the Old Testament after Jesus Christ to be a Christian book, denying a particular Jewish claim to its use, and at the same time inviting the Jews to realize the true meaning of the Old Testament as revealed through Jesus Christ, and to join the Christian church. This was a very difficult and ambiguous question that in some circles is still under discussion: What about the Jewish claim for the Old Testament if one looks from a Christian point of view that takes the Bible as a unity accepting only its Christian interpretation. Here we could make a long excursus on the whole problem of Christian mission to the Jews; but this is not our topic. I assume that in our context the Jewish claim to the Old Testament or Tanakh is no longer questioned, so that we have to discuss the relations on a different level. I will come back to that later.

I also believe that today there are at most a very few voices in the Christian church and among theologians that are denying the relevance of the Old Testament for the Christian church in general. But we find a number of Christian theologians claiming that only the New Testament could provide the theological criteria for the Old Testament. I only mention Antonius Gunneweg's well-known book *Understanding the Old Testament*, in which he definitely declares that the only measurement for the theological validity of Old Testament texts can be the New Testament. From that point of view the Old Testament always will have a subordinate position in relation to the New Testament. This implies that an Old Testament theology in its own right could not exist at all because it has to be judged from the outside. Unfortunately, none of the scholars arguing like this so far have presented an Old Testament theology themselves. Perhaps they would rather have to present a biblical theology. Nobody knows, because none of them did it. This is one of the sometimes disturbing phenomena of today that there is a huge number of articles and even books on how to do Old Testament theology, but very few books really doing it. So we are left with the information that some Christian theologians claim that the Old Testament theologically has to be judged from the New Testament, but we do not know how they want to execute their claim.

III.

What we need is an Old Testament theology in its own right. This brings us back to the question of a Christian Old Testament theology and a Jewish Tanakh theology. Could the claim for an Old Testament theology in its own right imply that Jews and Christians could do it in the same way? In order to approach this question I want to begin with the Jewish side. Is there, or could there be a Jewish Tanakh theology?

Again we have to go back into history. "Theology" originally is a Christian phenomenon. We need not go through the whole history of Christian theology but only back to the beginning of biblical theology, that means again to Gabler. This reminds us that biblical theology grew out of Christian dogmatic theology. It would go far beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the problem why there is not such a thing as Jewish "theology". I will just give a few hints that might show some of the reasons.

The first reason is that in Judaism there are no systematically reflected creeds and even no dogmas. There is actually only one creed, namely: *shema' jisra'el 'adonaj 'elohenu 'adonaj 'echad*, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone". During the centuries some attempts have been made to formulate certain essentials of the Jewish faith. One of the most famous are the "Thirteen Principles" by Maimonides. But they are not to be found in any dogmatic book of doctrines but in the prayer book as an appendix to the regular morning service. In Christianity theology developed mainly in explaining dogmas. Judaism had no need for that.

The next main reason is the way Scripture is handled in the Jewish tradition. There is also no systematic discussion of certain questions of faith, but individual verses from different books and parts of the Bible are taken together according to a very sophisticated method in order to clarify the meaning of a certain quotation or topic. As a modern Jewish scholar put it: "Classical Jewish exegesis was largely philological-atomistic, not theological-synthetical" ⁽²⁾.

But still another aspect of the problem has to be taken into account. In Christian Europe Jews had always been excluded from any public or academic study of the Hebrew Bible. Since Reformation times Christian Bible scholars were familiar with Hebrew and even with the traditional rabbinic exegetical methods, and they had a lot of public discussions on certain questions, e.g. about the authoritative character of the Tiberian vocalization of the Hebrew Bible; but Jews are not included. And also after the Emancipation in the 19th century things did not change fundamentally. Now Jews could enter an academic career — but not in the studies of their own Bible. For Bible studies were the monopoly of the theological faculties, so that Jews were excluded from it from the outset. They could enter the fields of history and philology, but not that of exegesis and theology. Therefore even in the nineteenth century Jews were not included in the general discussions on biblical problems, including theology ⁽³⁾.

This exclusion of Jewish Bible scholars is the one side of the problem. The other side are certain features of Christian biblical theology. This had recently been criticized by Jon Levenson, a Jewish Bible scholar at Harvard Divinity School, in particular in an essay entitled "Why Jews are not

⁽²⁾ M. H. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, "Christianity, Judaism and Modern Bible Scholarship", VTS 28 (1975) 79.

⁽³⁾ For that question see GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, "Christianity, Judaism and Modern Bible Scholarship", 69-88.

interested in biblical theology" (4). In this essay he demonstrates certain typical attitudes of Christian biblical theologians that make it difficult if not impossible for Jews to be interested in this matter:

One reason for the distance Jewish biblicists tend to keep from biblical theology is the intense anti-Semitism which is evident in many of the classic works in that field. Old Testament theology is, in fact, often really the modern continuation of the ancient *adversus Judaeos* tradition in which the New Testament writers and the church fathers excelled. After the insistence on the compatibility of Old and New Testament theology, few points are more *de rigueur* in the Old Testament theologies than deprecatory remarks about Rabbinic Judaism (287).

Levenson gives a number of examples of this kind of anti-Jewish bias in works of Christian biblical theologians. Yet I think I need not quote them because all of you are familiar with this unfortunate tradition of Christian Bible scholarship, in particular because Levenson can quote from Christian authors who collected those things like Charlotte Klein, Rosemary Ruether and others. My question now is whether all this must prevent us from a Jewish-Christian dialogue in particular in this field where we have a common text to work on, and even a Jewish text. And in that context my question is whether this could be the last word to the question of a Jewish Tanakh theology.

Fortunately there are some signs that it will not. Levenson gave the first sign himself. Only one year after this article appeared Levenson published a book that could hardly be deemed anything other than a piece of biblical theology, of *Jewish* biblical theology, of course. The author puts it clearly in the preface that one of the main motivations for him to write this book was "the lack of sophisticated theological reflection upon even such central and overworked aspects of the religion of Israel as creation and covenant", and that the book is to be understood as "a theological study" (5). The title of the book is *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*, and this is really one of the most interesting recent books on biblical theology of creation. Also in other publications Levenson promises to become one of the present biblical theologians who has something to contribute to the international and interreligious discussion on biblical theology.

There are other Jewish scholars as well who are participating in discussions about common Jewish-Christian problems of Bible interpretation. I am able to refer to two books on symposiums held in recent years in Bern, Switzerland, and in Notre Dame, USA, where Jewish and Christian Bible scholars for several days discussed problems of biblical interpretation,

(4) In *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (ed. J. NEUSNER et al.) (Philadelphia 1987) 281-307.

(5) J. D. LEVENSON, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco 1988) xiv.

among them also those of biblical theology⁽⁶⁾. And last but not least I want to quote an article by the late Moshe Goshen-Gottstein that contains even the word "Tanakh Theology" in its title: "Tanakh Theology: The Religion of the Old Testament and the Place of Jewish Biblical Theology"⁽⁷⁾. It is known that Moshe Goshen-Gottstein planned to write a book on biblical theology, but it was not granted to him to complete this work.

IV.

I do not know whether there will be something like a Tanakh theology in the near future. But it is obvious that there began a dialogue between Jewish and Christian Bible theologians around this topic. I believe that this fact must have fundamental consequences for Christian Bible theologians as well. At the beginning of this paper I briefly discussed the relations between Old Testament theology and biblical theology. In that connection the main point is the dependence or independence of Old Testament theology from Christian theology in general. Now a new aspect has to be added: the relation of a Christian Old Testament theology to a Jewish Old Testament or Tanakh theology.

Why and how must this be of relevance for a Christian Bible theologian? First, it begins with the very simple fact that the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament is first of all a Jewish book, that it has been written and handed on and read by Jews before Christianity came into existence. Therefore a Christian Bible scholar cannot interpret the Old Testament from a specific Christian point of view without having before reflected on the original Jewish context. The complexity of this matter I want to demonstrate by two examples.

The first example refers to the question of the identity of the "Servant of the Lord", the *'ebed jhw*, in Isa 40–55. This question is controversially disputed among Christian Bible scholars. Some will assume an individual understanding of the Servant, be it the prophet himself or any other person. From an exegetical point of view those scholars could be open to a christological interpretation. Other scholars who prefer a collective or corporate exegesis of the servant will be unable to see the traditional Christian interpretation as to be in accordance with the meaning of the text itself. On the other hand, those who are inclined to a collective or corporate understanding could be open to the dominating Jewish interpretation of the Servant as representing Israel. The exegetical decision in most cases would be made, at least consciously, independently from the Christian liturgical and dogmatic tradition. In the scholarly literature on these questions the consequences for the Christian use of these texts mostly are not explicitly

⁽⁶⁾ *Mitte der Schrift. Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch* (ed. M. KLOPFENSTEIN et al.) (Bern 1987); *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. Studying the Bible in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. R. BROOKS–J. J. COLLINS) (Notre Dame 1990).

⁽⁷⁾ In *Ancient Israelite Religion. Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. P. D. MILLER et al.) (Philadelphia 1987) 617–644.

mentioned. But it is obvious that the exegetical decision will have far-reaching consequences for the hermeneutical relations between their own exegetical-theological insights and the Christian tradition of interpretation. Therefore it would be of high interest and value to discuss these different views with Jewish Bible scholars committed to their own religious tradition.

Another example could be the traditional Christian notion that to speak theologically about creation is only possible through Jesus Christ. One of the proof texts for such a dogmatic position is Col 1,15-17 where it is said that Jesus Christ is "the first-born of all creation", and that "in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" etc. Another text is, of course, John 1,1-3:

In the beginning was the Word (*ho logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

It is obvious and well known that this text reflects certain Hellenistic Jewish speculations about the *hokmah* in Prov 8,22-31, whose Greek equivalent is *sophia*, which then was equated with *logos*. A dogmatic notion that is built on those extra-biblical speculations scarcely can be a hermeneutical key to a biblical text. Outside Protestant Old Testament scholarship this dogmatic position is still widely held. But it is interesting to see that in von Rad's commentary on Genesis there is not any hint to this Christian tradition. Westermann speaks in more general terms about God's history with mankind that begins with creation and finally has its center in what happened in Jesus Christ, but he also does not mention the notion of creation through Jesus Christ.

Yet both commentators, and others as well (e.g. Zimmerli), mention the aspect of the seventh day of creation and point to the relevance of the biblical Sabbath as well as to certain eschatological aspects involved. But they do not mention the importance of the Sabbath in post-biblical and contemporary Judaism. Possibly they would argue that this would go beyond the scope of their task as commentators of a biblical text. But in any case, it would be interesting and useful to discuss these things with Jewish Bible scholars. Then, Christian scholars would have to ask themselves what consequences the shift from Sabbath to Sunday as the weekly Christian holy day must have for the Christian interpretation of Gen 1,1-2,3, and whether it would be possible at all to interpret the creation story without paying attention to the Jewish tradition of Sabbath.

These more or less arbitrary examples should demonstrate the actually close interrelation between Jewish and Christian Bible exegesis. On the other hand they show the lack of hermeneutical reflections about these relations. I believe that it would be very important and very useful for Christian as well as for Jewish Bible theologians to exchange views and methodological approaches in the field of exegesis of our common Hebrew Bible. Old Testament theology and Tanakh theology never will be identical because their authors come from different religious and theological back-

grounds and each of them is responsible to his or her own religious community. But the interchange of exegetical and theological insights would be very fruitful for both of them in their respective religious framework.

V.

Finally, I want to come back to biblical theology. I argued that we need an Old Testament theology in its own right. But I also tried to make clear that an Old Testament theology done by a Christian biblical theologian cannot be independent from its religious framework. But the question is how this relation should be formulated and unfolded.

Biblical theology could be one important aspect to link Old Testament theology to Christian thinking and belief. But as I earlier mentioned briefly: there is no biblical theology. In recent years, there is a lot of literature, mostly essays and reviews, on the question what biblical theology could be about. But everything is still in the stage of projects and experiments⁽⁸⁾. Therefore let me formulate some of my own reflections and questions and finally one request.

My main question is: What could be the function of a biblical theology in its relation to Old Testament theology? One could answer this question in different ways and different directions. First, one could argue that in the framework of Christian theology the criterion for the theological validity and legitimacy can only come from the New Testament or from dogmatic theology. Such a position would come into a severe conflict with the claim for an Old Testament theology in its own right. Can there be any criteria for valuing the Old Testament coming from the outside? And what could be the function of those criteria? On what questions could they decide? Could from an outside point of view certain words or ideas of the Old Testament be declared to be wrong? I think that the Old Testament can only be valued in itself. A different question is whether and how Old Testament words and ideas are in concord with those of the New Testament or post-biblical Christian theology. But this is a basically different question because it could lead to a comparison but never to a valuation.

A second way could be to try to develop a comprehensive concept of biblical theology embracing both Old and New Testament. This includes again several problems. The first one is the question of the Old Testament canon. Some theologians trying to develop such an overarching concept are denying the relevance or even legitimacy of the canon of the Hebrew Bible. They argue that there would be a line leading from Old Testament prophecy through Apocalypics into the New Testament excluding the central elements of the priestly traditions in the Old Testament that finally led into rabbinic Judaism. This widely discussed position includes two central points that in my opinion have to be strongly rejected. The one is the question of canon. It would go far beyond the scope of this paper to

⁽⁸⁾ Cf. H. SEEBASS, "Biblische Theologie", *VF* 27 (1982) 30; H. GRAF RE-VENTLOW, in *Mitte der Schrift* (see note 6) 9.

enter the at present vividly discussed problem of canonical interpretation. But for me it is of eminent relevance that we have the Old Testament only in the shape of the Masoretic canon. We are not at all free to decide whether we like it or not. On the contrary: We will be faithful Bible exegetes only by keeping and interpreting the canon in its given form.

The second point, related to the first one, is the depreciation of the Judaism of late biblical and post biblical times. Some of the theologians I mentioned before explicitly declare post-biblical Judaism to be the wrong way because it derogated the real essence of the Old Testament that only found its continuity in the New Testament. This shows one of the main problems of the attempt to develop a biblical theology that embraces Old and New Testament. It is very dangerous to make the New Testament the only criterion and to subordinate the Old Testament to its judgement. As an Old Testament theologian who at the same time feels obliged to take the Jewish character of the Hebrew Bible seriously I can only definitely oppose those concepts.

I would propose a third way. Biblical theologians should study the New Testament first of all as written by Jews who stood in an immediate and unbroken continuity with the Bible (in Hebrew or Aramaic, or even in Greek), and who never had the idea to be something else than Jews. New Testament theologians usually begin their interpretation with the premise that the writers and readers of these texts were Christians that no longer felt themselves to be Jews. As a consequence of this approach exegetes of the New Testament are mainly interested in the differences between both Testaments. They try to find out how the Christians used the Old Testament by changing its meaning in a more or less fundamental way.

Very few New Testament theologians read their texts the other way around, interpreting it as a part of the contemporary Jewish literature. But it is important that there are a number of Jewish scholars who did it and even today do it that way. There are famous names among them like Joseph Klausner, David Flusser, Samuel Sandmel, Geza Vermes, and, most recently, Alan F. Segal. I want to quote in particular the last mentioned as a younger representative of a new way of reading the New Testament. I could demonstrate that by the title of one of his books, namely *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity*⁽⁹⁾. In this book Christianity is dealt with as one of the different kinds of Judaism of Late Antiquity, alongside the mainstream Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism. Recently, I had the occasion to discuss problems of early Jewish-Christian relations with Professor Segal and other Jewish scholars. It was an eye-opening for me how the New Testament can be read with Jewish eyes, first of all not as something alien but as something closely related to their own tradition. Segal's most recent book on Paul has the subtitle: "The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee"⁽¹⁰⁾. Here first of all Segal takes Paul (or Saul) seriously as a Pharisee and reads Paul's writings in this context.

⁽⁹⁾ A. F. SEGAL, *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity* (Atlanta, GA 1987).

⁽¹⁰⁾ A. F. SEGAL, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven 1990).

Only then, from that point of departure, does he follow Paul's way out of Torah-centered Judaism.

I am convinced that by reading the New Testament that way we would realize a much more deeply-rooted relation between the New Testament's reading of the Old Testament and the contemporary Jewish reading. We would first of all become aware of the Jewish character of the New Testament. In the context of this paper this would mean not to read the New Testament primarily focussing on its differences and divergences from the Old Testament but on its dependence on and relationship to the Old Testament. Of course, a New Testament theology should not conceal the differences between both Testaments, not even the obvious anti-Jewish elements unfortunately to be found in the New Testament. But when trying to do biblical theology the main question has to be that of the starting point. In my view it should be the close relationship between the Old Testament and the writings of the originally Jewish group that later developed out of Judaism and then was called Christianity.

Some years ago, the well-known Old Testament theologian Norbert Lohfink published a book entitled "The Jewish Element in Christianity" (*Das Jüdische am Christentum*) with the sub-title: "The Lost Dimension" ⁽¹⁾. This is a very important point of view. Christianity lost its Jewish dimension, or at least it lost the consciousness of its Jewish dimension. I believe that the discussion around the question of biblical theology makes this loss visible. Christians always want to define their difference from Judaism instead of rethinking their close relations to the religion they grew out of. Therefore I believe that even biblical theology could provide an important contribution to the recovery of the Jewish origins of Christianity, not only as an element of the past but as an important ingredient of the present self-definition of Christian existence.

This will, of course, never deny or veil the remaining fundamental differences between Judaism and Christianity, nor the differences in reading the Tanakh or the Old Testament. But after almost two thousand years of Christians forgetting their close relations to Judaism, and in the world of today that needs the common efforts of those rooted in the biblical tradition, it is high time to emphasize the commonalities in believe and to join in taking common responsibility to fulfill the biblical commitment to promote righteousness and peace.

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⁽¹⁾ N. LOHFINK, *Das Jüdische am Christentum: Die verlorene Dimension* (Freiburg 1987).

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